

Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

# Draft General Plan

*Planning Tomorrow's Great Places*

**2008**







Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning

# Draft General Plan

***Planning Tomorrow's Great Places***

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*"To enrich lives through effective and caring service."*



*"To improve the quality of life through innovative and resourceful physical and environmental planning, balancing individual rights and community needs."*

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# FOREWORD

## I. INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, Los Angeles County has been a place where people come to realize the California dream. From the cool breezes along the Pacific Ocean to the hot winds of the Mojave Desert, from the once-volatile banks of the Los Angeles River to the unstable foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains, Los Angeles County's varied settings have offered both migrants and natives a wide range of choices about where and how to live. Today, Los Angeles is one of the great metropolises of the world. Over 10 million people live in Los Angeles County, and while 9 million people reside in one of the 88 incorporated cities, another 1 million residents live in the unincorporated communities of the County, making it effectively the third largest city in the state behind Los Angeles and San Diego.

For almost all of those hundred-plus years, the California dream has been realized in Los Angeles County primarily through the creation of new human settlements out of raw land. Whether the dream consisted of a small cottage at the beach or a bungalow in the flats of southern Los Angeles County or a chicken farm in one of the inland valleys, the basis of dream has been the subdivision of land and the creation of thousands of single-family lots to accommodate the cottages and the bungalows and the farms.

Although the chicken farms are mostly gone, agriculture still exists in some northern parts of the county. Many of the bungalows and cottages remain, and often form the basis of thriving neighborhoods – some already outstanding, some on the rebound. And although a fair amount of open land remains, the majority of it is environmentally sensitive – it's steep land, or it's a wetland, or it's an important

wildlife habitat or watershed, or it's scenic or fire-prone, or it's worth preserving because it is the last remaining rural spaces in Los Angeles County.

So the California dream in Los Angeles County looks very different today. The County is a crowded and expensive place, and increasingly one whose fragility has become more obvious with the incidence of wildfires, water shortages, and aging infrastructure. And no longer does the California dream in Los Angeles County revolve around subdividing land. Instead, the 21st Century version revolves around preserving, strengthening, and recognizing that many of those great places are located inside the developed communities the County has already helped to shape.

### Los Angeles County's Great Places – An Historical Perspective

The Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission plays a unique and important role in the history of American city planning. Regional planning originated in Los Angeles County in 1922 with the establishment of the Regional Planning Commission, the oldest planning body in the country. For more than 80 years, the Los Angeles County Regional Planning Commission and the general plans it has produced contained elegant ideas about city planning and helped to shape the unusual and flexible nature of Los Angeles today.

By 1930 Los Angeles had become a decentralized, yet orderly, metropolis – thanks in large part to the efforts of the Regional Planning Commission. Los Angeles County was built on the premise that orderly dispersion of homes and businesses contributes to the efficiency and aesthetics of the modern city. Prior to the adoption of formal comprehensive zoning and development regulations, the piecemeal regulation of tracts for residential development provided



for the proliferation of the suburban ideal. Dispersion of neighborhoods and places of commerce—but within a series of interconnected road and transit ways--was seen as an attractive alternative to the perceived disadvantages of urban life found in the crowded great cities of the East Coast and the Midwest. In fact, one of the Regional Planning Commission's first projects was undertaking plans for the region's first major highways. Routes were chosen based on the principle that city and county roadways should provide for the expansion of suburban development and efficient movement of goods, all with ease of access and proximity to downtown.

Contemporary land use planning in Los Angeles County began in the early 1970s, when the first General Plan was adopted and the Regional Planning Department was first designated as a separate county department. A completely revised County General Plan was adopted in 1980 and it has governed land use in unincorporated Los Angeles County for nearly 30 years.

So in many ways, the County, through its dispersed development model and the manner in which it directed growth, played a key role in shaping the growth pattern that characterizes Los Angeles today. Although many of the resulting communities later incorporated or annexed into existing cities, they were essentially birthed by the L.A. County regional planning effort. Today, dozens of these communities – ranging from Marina del Rey at the Pacific Ocean to the rural subdivisions in the High Desert, from the proud single-family neighborhoods of South Los Angeles to the communities planted in the natural setting of the Santa Monica Mountains – help make up the distinct character that is metropolitan Los Angeles.

### Planning Tomorrow's Great Places

For Los Angeles County, planning tomorrow's great places will be a much more complex process than was the case in the days of shaping new neighborhoods and communities from raw land. For this reason, the role of planning in shaping the future of Los Angeles County – and especially the role of the Los Angeles County General Plan – must evolve to meet these changing conditions and circumstances.

The unincorporated County territory that is regulated by the General Plan still covers a vast area – more than 2,600 square miles, an area larger than two states. The County is demographically diverse as well. Many unincorporated

areas in southern Los Angeles County are historically African-American; unincorporated East Los Angeles is mostly Latino; while the unincorporated neighborhoods in the San Gabriel Valley have large Asian populations. And the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County are growing in population faster than the rest of the County, especially the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. As the municipal government for these unincorporated communities, Los Angeles County is, in essence, the third-largest city in California and the 10th-largest in America, slightly bigger than San Jose or Detroit. These people are also not concentrated in one central location but are scattered in dozens of unincorporated areas throughout the County. Some, especially those in the Santa Monica Mountains and the Antelope Valley, are sparsely populated, while a string of small but well-established urban neighborhoods on the south and east sides of Los Angeles are well-positioned jewels situated in attractive locations along the Blue Line, the Green Line, and the Gold Line.

So the General Plan must address a wide range of issues in a sophisticated way – and do so with an overarching planning theme that addresses the following community-identified goals:

- A strong and diversified economy;
- Fiscal, environmental and social sustainability;
- Revitalization of urban areas and affordable housing;
- Adequate community services and facilities;
- Transportation alternatives and improved air quality;
- Protection from hazards; and,
- A wide variety of environmental and conservation objectives.

These are ambitious goals, and that is why this General Plan is organized around the concept of *sustainability*. Sustainability was originally conceived of as an environmental notion – the idea that we must meet current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Over time, this idea has been expanded to include other realms of human endeavor as well, including economic sustainability and the concept of sustainable social equity. Obviously, all of these concerns must be addressed in the General Plan. But in a rapidly maturing area such as Los Angeles County, the best way to think about sustainability is in the context of *creating and reinforcing great places*. In other words, creating a sustainable future is

best achieved by pursuing the principles of “smart growth” – preserving the County’s remaining natural and rural areas, protecting and even enhancing its well-established and diverse neighborhoods, landscapes, and its individual and collective range of great places.

To accomplish this, the new General Plan is wide-ranging—dealing not only with land use planning but also with sustainability as well as such topics as infrastructure, public health, environmental protection, energy conservation, and economic development. Obviously, a General Plan that must address all these topics – and do so on a landscape that already contains millions of people and buildings and thousands of miles of roads – must use a vast array policies and land use strategies.

So the County is in a unique position to shape development throughout the region and plan for tomorrow’s great places. The General Plan is the foundation policy document that will help the County achieve this goal – by dealing with a wide range of issues, using a wide range of policy tools, and applying them strategically in a wide range of places.

## II. PLANNING AND MAKING TOMORROW’S GREAT PLACES – A JOURNEY THROUGH LOS ANGELES COUNTY

A plan as ambitious as the Los Angeles County General Plan requires an organizing principle such as sustainability, but in a place with the largest and most diverse local government in the nation, there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to growth and development. The goals, policies, strategies, and implementation tools required to bring about tomorrow’s great places must be as varied and diverse as the place itself. Truly understanding the place - and the challenges facing the General Plan – requires a journey through Los Angeles County.

### Antelope Valley

The northern part of Los Angeles County, stretching from Santa Clarita all the way north to Tejon Ranch and the Antelope Valley is the fastest-growing part of the County and, in many ways, the one where the County’s approach to planning is most traditional. Large swaths of open land still exist and there is tremendous pressure for development,

especially for residential development. This area is one of the few left in Los Angeles County where it is still possible to build single-family homes in large numbers.

Yet the Antelope Valley is also dotted with a series of small communities that cherish their status as the last places in Los Angeles County where one can live the rural life, farm, or tend to their animals. The small hamlet of Acton is representative of many of the ideals and aspirations of the communities in the Antelope Valley, where urban and suburban-type development is unwanted, and where low-density, open space development is the norm. Acton, like many of the communities in the high desert, clings tightly to its identity and enforces rural standards, such as the Old West Country design standards for the town’s small commercial district, to ward off the sprawl of the booming cities of Lancaster and Palmdale.

So how does the General Plan ensure that places like Acton will remain a great place to live and work in the next 20 years? Through a variety of planning policies and land use strategies that are designed to meet a series of long-range outcomes. For example, the Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) overlay was created to protect the County’s remaining biological and natural resources and covers large swaths of biologically important open space land in the north county. The SEA designation provides a layer of regulatory review as a way to guide development away from these resources and to preserve these valuable lands. Programs and tools such as the SEAs will be invaluable in ensuring that communities like Acton, 20 years from now, will still fulfill the hopes and aspirations of its residents and businesses.

And while the General Plan provides numerous policies and strategies to preserve the desired way of life in the Antelope Valley, an equally important planning tool in achieving this goal will be the County’s efforts at community-based planning. The *Antelope Valley Area Plan* is an area-wide land use plan adopted in 1986 that supplements the General Plan and provides the Antelope Valley with more local level, detailed land use policy direction. More than 20 years later, a new area-wide plan is being written called *Town & Country*. Once completed, *Town & Country* will represent the new vision for the Antelope Valley. It will update the Valley’s land use policies to coincide with the General Plan and provide additional, community-based policies to ensure that the vision for Antelope Valley communities like Acton are realized.



## Santa Clarita Valley

State Highway 14 is the only major road available for travelers southwards from the Antelope Valley down to the Santa Clarita Valley. Historically, the Santa Clarita Valley had a lot in common with its neighbors to the north. But the City of Santa Clarita, planned by the County until its incorporation in 1987, is an example of a group of small villages that has become a major residential and commercial center of Los Angeles County.

The villages of the valley that incorporated into the City of Santa Clarita – Newhall, Saugus, Valencia, and Canyon Country -- wanted more local control of their land use decisions. But much of the remaining undeveloped property in the Santa Clarita Valley is located in unincorporated County territory, meaning the Department of Regional Planning still plays a major role in the Valley's development. For this reason, the County must increasingly partner with cities new and old to manage future growth. Perhaps the best example of this trend is the *One Valley, One Vision* joint effort between Los Angeles County and the City of Santa Clarita. "OVOV," as it is typically known, will create a single General Plan for the Santa Clarita Valley that would be incorporated into both the City and County General Plans. OVOV as it is typically known, goes far beyond typical planning efforts and represents a new direction for collaborative, long-range, visionary planning for the County. The *One Valley One Vision Plan* promotes a model Smart Growth land use form and pattern of development that limits and reduces carbon emissions and global warming, improves air quality by linking housing and employment, promotes mixed use and higher density development along transit and transportation corridors, and encourages planned, self-centered, full service village communities that promote walkability and minimize the personal use of automobiles while preserving environmentally sensitive lands.

The villages of the Santa Clarita Valley will further be shaped by General Plan strategies such as the Hillside Management Overlay, which address the development of land that is largely hilly and fire-prone. The Hillside Management Overlay is similar to the SEA in that it provides direction for development proposals that are located on or near steep slopes in order to preserve the county's remaining scenic ridgelines and hillsides. As development continues to creep into the County's remaining natural and hazard areas, plan-

ning tools such as the Hillside Management Overlay will reinforce the need for safe and responsible development that will preserve this valley of villages.

## Santa Monica Mountains

Like the Santa Clarita Valley, the Santa Monica Mountains area is a region of rare beauty and environmental sensitivity that the General Plan strives to protect. It is home to a bounty of rich and diverse biological resources including several significant plant communities, habitats, and a variety of wildlife species. As in the Santa Clarita Valley, the General Plan in the Santa Monica Mountains must acknowledge the emergence of new cities in the area and provide ways for the County to work with these cities to manage future growth. Since the last General Plan was adopted in 1980, four cities in the Santa Monica Mountains have been incorporated – Agoura Hills, Calabasas, Westlake Village, and Malibu. But, as in the Santa Clarita Valley, most of the remaining undeveloped property in the Santa Monica Mountains is located in unincorporated County territory, meaning the Los Angeles County General Plan and supplemental land use plans will control most of the new development in these areas.

So fragile and beautiful are the Santa Monica Mountains that the National Park Service and other state agencies have spent billions of dollars purchasing as much land as possible to create a National Recreation Area in close proximity to one of the largest urban areas in the country. The Santa Monica Mountains region also represents some of the most collaborative and effective community-based County planning efforts. The Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Plan implements the provisions and policies of the California Coastal Act, while the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan is a unique cooperative planning effort between local cities, the National Park Service, and area and water districts to protect the mountains' scenic resources and to regulate incompatible development.

The General Plan recognizes the urgent need to reconcile the conflicting demands between the conservation of the diverse and spectacular resources in regions like the Santa Monica Mountains, protecting people from the myriad natural hazards in the County, and the continual urban and suburban expansion of the County's human settlements. Using the inspiration of the renowned writer and regional planner Ian McHarg, whose *Design with Nature* pioneered the idea that land use planning could be combined with

ecological planning, the Department of Regional Planning has created its own valuable planning tool to implement its Smart Growth strategies called the *Environmental Constraints and Development Suitability Map*. The County's land suitability model utilizes an integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) approach to take a quantitative, comprehensive, and multi-criteria approach in evaluating the suitability for future land use development in the County. The development suitability index utilizes a combination of environmental constraints, such as proximity to natural resource and natural hazard areas, as well as development criteria including proximity to public transit, public services, and infrastructure, to help planners, County officials, and residents make informed and efficient land use decisions. In short, the Suitability Map highlights the areas in the County most appropriate for new population, residential, and economic growth while simultaneously preserving the County's open spaces and natural resources.

### San Gabriel Valley

At the opposite end of Los Angeles County from the Santa Monica Mountains lies the San Gabriel Valley. Located east of downtown Los Angeles and stretching out to the Riverside and San Bernardino County borders, the San Gabriel Valley presents a unique set of planning challenge for Los Angeles County and its General Plan. First developed with small rural subdivisions in the '20s and '30s, and later with mass-produced housing after World War II, the San Gabriel Valley today is a mostly built-out area where 31 cities are intertwined with dozens of unincorporated communities and "county islands" – small neighborhoods which have never annexed to any city and therefore are still under county jurisdiction.

Yet the San Gabriel Valley today is one of Los Angeles County's most rapidly changing areas. It has undergone huge demographic change in the last 30 years and today is one of the most ethnically and racially diverse areas in Southern California. Once a bedroom suburb, it is now a job center and attracts commuters from as far away as the Inland Empire. Although the San Gabriel Valley is still mostly a low-rise, auto-oriented place, it is increasingly transit-rich, creating new opportunities to shape future development patterns. Metrolink and the El Monte Busway provide unusually good regional transit connections – and if the Gold Line Extension along the 210 Freeway is ever built, these connections will be even better. And the Valley's old

arterial grid system creates unusually good opportunities for bus service and bus rapid transit lines in a region where bus ridership is already surprisingly high.

The unincorporated community of East Pasadena/East San Gabriel in the San Gabriel Valley is the perfect canvas for the County's General Plan to create tomorrow's great places. East Pasadena is a stable community of single-family neighborhoods with multi-family dwellings along major boulevards such as the venerable Huntington Drive, which connects East Pasadena to its posh neighbors of San Marino, Pasadena and Arcadia. Rosemead Boulevard provides a major commercial route through the community and bisects the I-210 only a few short miles from the last Gold Line stop.

Over a period of 20 years, through the vision of the General Plan, East Pasadena can be the place where the County employs a strategic infill and mixed use development plan that will truly transform the community into one of the County's great places. Mixed-use development along Rosemead Boulevard could bring a variety of housing types to the area in proximity to public transit options. A focus on walkability as outlined in the General Plan can create a vibrant, livable streetscape in East Pasadena that will rival that of its neighbors. And as the Gold Line extends down the I-210, a new transit-oriented development district can be built at the 210/Rosemead Boulevard nexus, connecting East Pasadena to the major job centers of the region in Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles.

The County's efforts to plan East Pasadena, Charter Oaks and the numerous other unincorporated islands in the San Gabriel Valley must be a tapestry of efforts that fit both carefully and elegantly into a sub-regional effort in the San Gabriel Valley. For these reasons, the San Gabriel Valley will be an excellent place for the County to again focus on its community-based planning efforts in a region that already has a long history of excellent local plans in two well-established unincorporated communities – Rowland Heights and Hacienda Heights. In the future, the General Plan and other community-based plans have an invaluable opportunity to fully integrate the San Gabriel Valley unincorporated islands, both economically and in terms of urban design, into the cities that surround them, even if they are not annexed.

## East Los Angeles

East Los Angeles, located between downtown Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley, is one of the oldest, largest, and most important unincorporated communities in Los Angeles County. East Los Angeles has traditionally been – and remains today – the center of Latino life in Los Angeles. It’s an unusually vibrant neighborhood, filled with street life and hidden pockets of prosperity. Yet East Los Angeles will inevitably serve as a focus point for implementation of the Los Angeles County General Plan and will require the use of a wide variety of tools designed to implement transit-oriented development and “smart growth” policies.

The Gold Line Extension from Downtown Los Angeles will open in 2009, creating new development pressures and opportunities in an area that is an extremely attractive location within the region. Tools such as the transit-oriented development ordinance and density bonuses will come into play, and they will have to be combined with efforts in such wide-ranging areas of policy as economic development and pedestrian oriented planning. In many ways, East Los Angeles will be the most important test of the General Plan and its application to urban areas, because implementation of the Plan must retain the special qualities of East Los Angeles while, at the same time, effectively taking advantage of the new development opportunities that are emerging.

An ambitious new planning endeavor in East Los Angeles is to create a Specific Plan for the new transit oriented districts that will come from the extended Gold Line. The East Los Angeles TOD Specific Plan aims to utilize form-based codes to regulate development in these new districts. As such, East Los Angeles represents a community with the opportunity to implement the best pedestrian-oriented policies and strategies of the General Plan. Pedestrian-oriented planning, with its focus on creating and planning for walkable, livable and active communities, achieves a major goal of the General Plan, which is to create great places that are sustainable and improve public health. Improved public health has long been a goal of land-use planning – and creating more opportunities for walking and physical activity can help younger people establish lifetime patterns of fitness that can help prevent – and later, manage – chronic disease such as asthma and diabetes. Good land use planning can also reduce air pollution emissions of all kinds – including

greenhouse gas emissions – in ways that will protect both the environment generally and the health of Los Angeles County’s population specifically.

Embracing smart growth principles in East Los Angeles can create walkable, convenient, attractive, and climate-friendly neighborhoods – enhancing public health while still providing housing, shopping, parks, and other amenities in a manner conducive to modern tastes. A new focus on pedestrian planning calls for the establishment of standards for sidewalks, reducing the challenges for pedestrians in urban, suburban and rural communities. By closing gaps in the existing system through design standards the County is ensuring a comfortable and safe walking environment. For example, limitations on curb cuts reduce pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. Building orientation and setbacks define the space reserved for pedestrians, and transit shelters, street trees, and awnings protect pedestrians from the sometimes harsh climate.

## South Los Angeles County

In many ways, South Los Angeles will be the most important laboratory for the implementation of the planning tools contained in the General Plan. But using the plan to strengthen these areas may be more challenging because, at least in the short run, demand for new real estate development may be lighter than in East Los Angeles, the San Gabriel Valley, or the northern county Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley regions..

South Los Angeles contains many historically African-American unincorporated communities, such as Willowbrook, West Athens, and Florence-Firestone, which have had a close attachment to nearby incorporated areas, such as the City of Inglewood and the Watts community, which is located in the City of Los Angeles. In recent years, these communities have undergone many important changes. First, an influx of immigrants from Latin America has altered the ethnic and racial makeup of almost all these communities, making them more multi-ethnic. Second, the Blue Line and the Green Line light-rail lines, which now transect these communities, have created important and exciting new planning opportunities in South Los Angeles.

The Blue Line traverses South Los Angeles on a north-south route, with stops in the heart of Willowbrook and Florence-Firestone, while the Green Line travels east-west

along the Century Freeway (Interstate 105), with stops in Willowbrook, Westmont-West Athens, and Lennox. These communities too will need better local level planning to guide future transitions, and many of the urban planning tools currently in place will have to be revised and improved to be effective. For example, the County has put transit-oriented development ordinances in place for both the Blue Line and Green Line communities, complete with provisions permitting mixed-use developments, but so far these ordinances have not been heavily used by developers. This lack of interest is partly a function of the private real estate market, but it also shows that the County must be vigilant in revisiting and upgrading the actual implementation tools, so that the General Plan's vision and the potential of these communities can be realized over time.

Florence-Firestone is representative of a lot of South Los Angeles communities in that it has a colorful history of prosperity followed by decline and neglect. Like most of the communities in South L.A., Florence-Firestone has far more to it than the crime-ridden representatives typically portrayed in popular culture. It has stable middle-class African American neighborhoods, new Latino marketplaces, and great opportunity for investment that will help all ethnicities.

As the County begins to focus on strengthening existing communities such as Florence-Firestone, economic development becomes more important – and it becomes essential to link land use changes with economic development. The economies of the communities in Los Angeles County vary widely, and this is especially true in the existing communities of South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles, many of which have struggled with prosperity for so long and cannot count merely on additional real estate development to bring lasting economic success.

In devising this General Plan, the County has worked with the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission (CDC), the Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC), and other public and private stakeholders to develop economic development goals and meld land use strategies to obtain them, including the following:

- Balance the needs of the entertainment industry and the local communities where its activities reside;

- Promote planning processes and development regulations that enhance the competitive edge of the County businesses;
- Update aging infrastructure to support the functioning of world-class Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, along with LAX;
- Pursue strategies that attract the green sector and other target industries; and,
- Protect jobs-rich, economically viable industrial lands from incompatible development.

The General Plan's Economic Development Element calls for the provision of the physical and land use needs to accommodate the County's economies of the future in a sustainable manner, particularly by promoting a strong and diversified economy. The revitalization and redevelopment of existing communities like Florence-Firestone and Willowbrook cannot be done through zoning alone, but land use policies can be coupled with economic development efforts to promote prosperity. And it is especially important for such prosperity to be sustainable in nature.

That's why the General Plan places so much emphasis on green technology as a primary vehicle for economic growth. Similarly, green industries that can support the local employment base while conducting profitable and environmentally sustainable business practices are the future of the County's economy. Communities such as Florence-Firestone, which have traditionally been a center of such businesses as scrap metal, can emerge as leaders in the world of green jobs and green businesses.

### III. PLANNING GREEN COMMUNITIES

Through our journey of the County, it is easy to see that the unincorporated communities are full of wonderful and diverse neighborhoods and each have their own set of planning challenges and opportunities. Importantly, none of the County's great places can be truly great in the future without being environmentally sustainable in all ways. That means that places must be constructed and maintained with sustainable materials. It means they have to reduce, rather than increase, our carbon footprint. And it means they have to be able to withstand, minimize, or, preferably, avoid, the fires, floods, earthquakes, and other natural disasters to which Southern California is so prone.



The new Los Angeles County General Plan addresses all of these aspects of making great places sustainable – and does so in a comprehensive way that addresses all aspects of County operations. Not only does the County manage the day-to-day operations of vital services for its residents, such as healthcare, public protection, and waste management, but it is also the largest employer in the 5-county region with over 100,000 employees. The County, then, has the opportunity to serve as a role model for other governments and employers in the region who are considering adopting sustainable business and land use practices.

An illustration of this leadership role can be seen in the joint effort between the Department of Regional Planning and the Department of Public Works to create, adopt, and implement the County’s Green Building Program. This program includes plans to implement development concepts such as Low Impact Development (LID), regulations that promote the use of natural lighting and improved indoor air quality, and requirements for drought-tolerant landscaping - concepts that are not only better for the environment, but also promote public health and employee productivity. The “green” ordinances being drafted by the County, which will play a large part in implementing many of the sustainable goals and policies that shape the General Plan, will make the County more energy and water-efficient, and ultimately will reduce its carbon footprint.

Sustainable communities must also be safe, and the County’s communities, especially on the suburban fringe and in rural areas, are especially vulnerable to natural hazards. So the General Plan must provide the foundation to make them more sustainable over time in the face of a hazard-prone environment and especially what biologists call a “fire-driven ecology”. In this regard, the new General Plan builds on existing policies and practices that are already strong. In the disastrous fires of recent years, many recent Los Angeles County subdivisions have received considerable publicity and attention for their ability to withstand and repel fires. However, maintaining that reputation relies on minimizing impacts on existing infrastructure.

Sustainable communities must also be able to house all of its residents regardless of their income level, race, or ethnicity. However, the recent housing bubble has been anything but sustainable. It is almost impossible to provide adequate housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families, especially for seniors, persons with disabilities,

single parent households, the homeless, and farmworkers has become increasingly difficult if not impossible. The Housing Element of the General Plan has the stated goal of planning for a wide range of housing types in sufficient supply to meet the needs of current and future residents. The following specific land use policies communicate how the County is proposing to create a sustainable housing supply and meet the growing housing needs of existing and future residents:

- Encourage mixed use residential and commercial developments along major transportation and commercial corridors.
- Support the development of affordable housing near employment opportunities and or within a reasonable distance of public transportation.
- Promote mixed income neighborhoods and a diversity of housing types throughout the unincorporated County to increase housing choices for all economic segments of the population
- Incorporate advances in energy-saving technologies into housing design, construction, operation, and maintenance.

Innovative mapping techniques are also important tools in creating a sustainable county. Los Angeles County has a long history of using environmental data as development guidance tools, and this is continuing on an unprecedented basis in the General Plan. In fact, the Department of Regional Planning’s early planners undertook an in-depth analysis of the County’s to determine land that was most suitable for development using aerial photography and other technology coming on line at that time. Some 75 years ago, the Regional Planning Commission also conducted an inventory and mapping of more than 450 square miles, identifying each land use that made up the urban fabric.

Today’s Regional Planning Department continues this tradition with modern-day mapping technology in a fashion analogous to that used by the original planners for Los Angeles aided by greater data precision in inventorying resources. Maps and diagrams in “Planning Tomorrow’s Great Places” reflect the same principles that ecologists employ in studying natural and human activity, building on existing environmental policies and spatially depicting the diverse geography of the County. Specific environmental policies are combined with site and regional characteristics in order to direct development away from environmentally



sensitive areas, those least suitable to human habitation or most costly to develop, such as seismic zones, hillsides and fire prone areas. The tradeoffs between Social needs such as public safety and affordable housing and environmental resources at the regional level are made clear. In this way – and many others – the General Plan’s many powerful tools are brought to bear to create not only great green places, but great sustainable places as well.

## IV. CONCLUSION

There is perhaps no local jurisdiction in the country that has such a long and storied history of planning – especially regional planning – as Los Angeles County does. Los Angeles is often viewed by outsiders as unplanned and sprawling. But as the history of the Regional Planning Commission suggests, the opposite is actually true. Los Angeles may be auto-oriented and decentralized, but it was planned that way, with residential neighborhoods built in close proximity to industrial and job centers and to small retail downtowns as well.

If Los Angeles County’s past planning efforts helped create its decentralized development pattern – appropriate for the 20th Century - then the County’s future planning efforts must reinforce and strengthen that pattern in a way that will work in the 21st Century. To truly plan and to make tomorrow’s great places actually happen, existing communities must be the focal point of future efforts. In some communities in the South and East County, this will require increasing permissible densities to take advantage of emerging transit opportunities; and it will also require combining land use planning and economic development efforts to stimulate needed improvements in these neighborhoods. In the northern part of the County, natural assets must be protected and, in so doing, the interconnected system of human settlements and natural areas must be strengthened together, and in places like the Santa Monica Mountains and the Antelope Valley, this will require the increased use of strong environmental policies in the General Plan. Economic, environmental, and human health concerns must be central to the effort to plan tomorrow’s great places. The County must be able to recognize and deal with the great diversity of places under its jurisdiction – and their relationship to great places already located in adjacent cities.

All these things the new General Plan does. But it is important to remember that the plan is not an end in itself. Ultimately, the purpose of a plan is to guide to creation of places. And so the ultimate measure of the Los Angeles County General Plan’s success will not be the policies and actions contained within it; but, rather, the quality of the great places – urban, suburban, rural, natural – that emerge throughout the County over the next 20 years.



**Bill Fulton**

*Publisher*

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# Chapter 1

## INTRODUCTION

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# INTRODUCTION

## I. WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The Los Angeles County General Plan is the guide for growth and development in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. California law requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning” (Government Code Section 65300). The General Plan is designed to guide the long-term physical development and conservation of the County’s land and environment through a framework of goals, policies, and implementation programs. The General Plan also provides a foundation for more detailed plans and implementation programs to be conducted, such as area or community plans, zoning ordinances, and specific plans.

Los Angeles County continues to grow at a tremendous pace. Careful planning and stewardship by County officials is needed to maintain the physical and natural amenities that make Los Angeles County a desirable place to live. Long-range planning also allows the County to responsibly manage future development, which is necessitated by continued population and economic growth. The General Plan is the County’s blueprint for guiding decision-making and meeting these diverse and contrasting needs.

### General Plan Defining Qualities

The Los Angeles County General Plan adheres to the following qualities as established by the State Office of Planning and Research guidelines:



View the General Plan Document online at:  
<http://planning.lacounty.gov/generalplan>

### General in Nature

The General Plan reflects goals that are general in nature and can apply to all areas of the unincorporated County. Simultaneously, the General Plan allows the policy needs of the diverse communities in the County to be addressed through community plans, area plans, specific plans, policy initiatives, and regulatory implementation mechanisms.

### Comprehensive in Scope

The General Plan addresses all aspects of physical development in the County, including land use development and growth, the provision of community services and affordable housing, and economic development activities that will sustain and promote the quality of life in the County.

### Consistency

The General Plan is a balanced and consistent document. Goals and policies within the General Plan have been developed to eliminate conflicts between one another (internal consistency) or with other agencies’ plans in the County.

### Short-term Policies Supporting Long-term Goals

The General Plan establishes a long-term blueprint for the County utilizing the most current information on the state of the County’s land use, economic, and social conditions. It is a forward-thinking document that uses shorter-term policies and implementation measures to strategically reach long-term goals.

### General Plan Guiding Principles

The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) has spent years gathering data and meeting with residents, business people, and County employees to assemble information to shape the General Plan. From this process, a progressive list of Guiding Principles was

“The enormous increase in scale of the metropolitan region today requires an entirely new scale of image if the region is to hold together as an entity

–Edmund Bacon

developed to direct the creation of the General Plan. These Guiding Principles helped shape the General Plan’s goals, policies, and implementation programs.

#### The Guiding Principles for the General Plan are:

- **Dynamic:** The General Plan is designed to be a visually engaging and exciting document that examines the existing social, physical, and economic conditions in the County and provides a forward-looking plan for the future.
- **Flexible:** The General Plan is adaptable to the fast-changing social, physical and economic environments of the County. To ensure continued relevance, the General Plan goals and policies will be re-evaluated every five (5) years or sooner if needed. Between these milestone updates, the General Plan will be amended as necessary (a maximum of four times per year in accordance with State law) to conform to changing laws, requirements, and the diverse needs of our communities.
- **Accountable:** The General Plan’s goals and policies are clearly articulated and formatted in order to facilitate an accountable General Plan that can be easily measured and evaluated.
- **Inspirational:** The General Plan is presented in a way that is intended to inspire and raise the aspirations of all residents, the business community, and County agencies to make the County an even better place to live and work.

- **Informative:** The General Plan is an educational, data-driven document designed to inform and enlighten the community about existing conditions and future possibilities for change.
- **Progressive:** The General Plan is a future-oriented, forward-thinking document, incorporating the newest and best practices related to technology, innovative development practices, energy conservation, environmental stewardship, and economic sustainability.

#### History of the Los Angeles County General Plan

The first attempts at formalizing a development plan for the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County began in 1970 with the creation of the Environmental Development Guide. Three years later in 1973, County officials adopted the first General Plan for Los Angeles County, and in 1980, the General Plan was revised and adopted by the County Board of Supervisors.

Since that time, the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County have undergone a variety of physical, demographic, and economic changes that present planners and County officials with a unique set of challenges and opportunities. The General Plan sets goals and policies that are designed to address immediate issues and concerns while maintaining an awareness of the long-term implications and consequences of these proposed actions. The General Plan incorporates an analysis of the current conditions in the



Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, 2008





Public Participation

County and provides planning policies that will affect long-term planning decisions. Although the General Plan envisions goals and policies with a 20-year horizon, the Department of Regional Planning will update the General Plan on a continual basis to reflect the dynamic nature of the ongoing development in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County.

### Public Participation

Community participation was critical in the development of the General Plan. The Department of Regional Planning conducted an extensive series of community workshops and environmental impact report (EIR) scoping meetings throughout the County to engage residents in the process of shaping the General Plan. Residents and planners worked together to collaboratively develop ideas for the goals and policies of the General Plan. The result of these visioning workshops was a draft of the General Plan goals and policies called *Shaping the Future 2025*, which was released for public review in 2004.

Further input for the development of the General Plan continued through 2004 to 2006 with a series of workshops and inter-departmental presentations. In the summer of 2007, the Draft Preliminary General Plan was released for public review and staff again conducted public outreach meetings to garner input into the planning process. Throughout the entire development process, the Department of Regional Planning kept community stakeholders apprised of the

status of the General Plan through the Department's General Plan Update Program website, as well as through meetings and presentations, as requested.

## II. GENERAL PLAN FORMAT

The California Government Code Section 65302 requires that all general plans contain and address seven elements: land use, transportation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. The Government Code also provides flexibility in the format and allows jurisdictions to combine elements or to cover new topics. The Los Angeles County General Plan contains all seven required elements, with the Conservation and Open Space elements being combined. The Housing Element is being updated as a separate document. The Los Angeles County General Plan also provides three additional Elements: Air Resources, Public Services and Facilities, and Economic Development. The General Plan is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** Introduction
- **Chapter 2:** Background
- **Chapter 3:** Land Use Element
- **Chapter 4:** Mobility Element
- **Chapter 5:** Air Resources Element
- **Chapter 6:** Conservation and Open Space Element
- **Chapter 7:** Noise Element
- **Chapter 8:** Safety Element
- **Chapter 9:** Public Services and Facilities Element
- **Chapter 10:** Economic Development Element

The following five companion documents comprise the Los Angeles County General Plan:

- **General Plan:** Contains a background discussion that frames how the General Plan was created, and the goals, policies, and implementation programs for each of the Elements.
- **Appendix I:** Area and Community Plan Land Use Policy Maps.
- **Appendix II:** Land Use Plan Maps for Unincorporated Areas without a Local Plan.
- **Technical Appendix:** Contains information and studies that were generated in creating the General Plan.



Downtown Los Angeles - Source: Pictometry International Corp

- **Environmental Impact Report (EIR):** Meets the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Regional Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors use the EIR to understand the potential environmental implications associated with implementation of the General Plan.

### III. THE ROLE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The Department of Regional Planning provides long-range planning that guides land use decisions and development patterns in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. The General Plan is the primary document that the Department utilizes in making land use and service development recommendations. In addition, the General Plan is a tool that facilitates inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional collaboration to meet agreed upon countywide land use and service-related goals. It provides valuable information to regional agencies, incorporated cities, and individual communities in unincorporated areas on the development patterns in the County for the next 20 years so that they can plan their service needs accordingly and effectively.

#### Regional Agencies

In Los Angeles County, special district agencies and regional agencies make many decisions related to the provision and maintenance of public services. For example, the County has numerous water districts, school districts, and sanitation

district providers. All regional agencies with jurisdictional activities in the County are responsible for coordinating with the County government on policies and programs that affect the region, as their policies often affect the County's urban and rural form of development. As such, the General Plan is a vehicle for providing general policy guidance to all of the agencies, districts, and governments that operate within the County's sphere of influence. Examples of the major regional agencies the County works with include the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), and the Metropolitan Water District (MWD).

#### Incorporated Cities

There are 88 cities in Los Angeles County, all of which have their own General Plans that govern their individual jurisdictions. While the Department of Regional Planning is responsible for the land use planning in unincorporated areas of the County, many other County agencies provide services to the unincorporated areas and many or all of the 88 incorporated cities. The General Plan primarily focuses on the unincorporated areas, which comprise nearly 65% of the 4,083 square miles of Los Angeles County. However, the General Plan does address regional issues that are countywide as appropriate, such as flood management or

SCAG's Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) is a holistic, strategic plan for defining and addressing Southern California's inter-related housing, traffic, water, air quality, and other regional challenges. In developing the RCP, SCAG relied on a set of Guiding Principles for sustaining a livable future that closely matched goals of the County's General Plan, such as:

- Improve mobility for all residents;
- Foster livability in all communities;
- Enable prosperity for all people; and,
- Promote sustainability for future generations.





Port of Los Angeles and Long Beach

fire hazards. The responsibilities and focus of countywide issues versus those specific to the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County are clearly identified throughout the General Plan.

### Unincorporated Communities

The General Plan Elements are structured to address issues that transcend local community interests and are of countywide importance. However, in California, more local-level planning is carried out through area and community plans. Community plans are a part of the General Plan but focus on a particular region or community within unincorporated Los Angeles County. A community plan is adopted by resolution as an amendment to the General Plan (in the manner set out in §65350, et seq). It refines the policies of the General Plan as they apply to a smaller geographic area and is implemented by ordinances and other discretionary actions, such as zoning. A community plan must be internally consistent with the General Plan of which it is a part, meaning all principles, goals, objectives, policies, and plan proposals set forth in an area or community plan must work within the overall context and framework of the General Plan. Each community plan need not address all of the issues required by the General Plan when the overall General Plan satisfies these requirements. However, a community plan may provide greater detail for policies affecting development in a defined area. The various types of community level planning are more fully addressed in the Land Use Element.

## IV. COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The goals and policies of the General Plan reflect the broadly expressed needs, concerns, and aspirations of County residents. Community participation and citizen feedback have been crucial components in the creation of the General Plan. Through public outreach activities, County residents identified the following ten (10) issues they felt were important topics to be addressed in the General Plan:

### Promote a Strong and Diversified Economy

- Provide a wide range of investment opportunities and job choices so that the County is less vulnerable to the harmful consequences of recessions.
- Provide an adequate supply of land suitable for industry and commerce to ensure a diversified and strong economy.
- Increase workforce training efforts to better prepare the job force for the careers of the future.

### Promote Fiscal, Environmental, Social and Logistical Sustainability

- Meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- Encourage practices that maximize user benefit, minimize waste and redundancy, and consistently promote the revitalization, restoration, and enhancement of the built, natural, and social environments.



Urban Infill Development and Affordable Housing

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- Promote the conservation of energy and other valuable natural resources as a basic principle in all planning activities.

#### **Promote Revitalization of Urban Areas**

- Direct development opportunities to areas most in need of economic investment.
- Emphasize code enforcement as a means to spur urban redevelopment in economically depressed urban areas.

#### **Provide Affordable Housing**

- Build and maintain a diversity of decent housing at an affordable price.

#### **Provide for Adequate Community Services and Facilities**

- Maintain roadways and regulate land uses.
- Provide community services and facilities like schools, parks, and libraries that play a significant role in the enrichment of the public consciousness.
- Develop a sense of place for the many neighborhoods within the County.
- Ensure proficient emergency service and infrastructure coverage, like sewer and wastewater systems, that are necessary for the health and safety of residents and visitors.
- Increase community services like daycare and job training centers.

#### **Promote Multimodal Transportation Alternatives and an Efficient Transportation System**

- Maintain and maximize the efficiency of the County highway and road network system by integrating and promoting alternative forms of transportation such as rail, bus, and biking.
- Improve the freight and highway system for the safe and efficient movement of goods.

#### **Improve Air Quality**

- Address the regional issue of air quality, which is important in maintaining a high quality of life for County residents.

#### **Conserve Water and Protect its Quality**

- Develop and promote strong conservation efforts and preserve land for the natural recharge of groundwater, which is essential to ensure an ongoing adequate supply of quality water to the County.

- Promote the development of a countywide recycled water system.

#### **Protect the Natural Environment, Natural Resources, and Conserve Open Space**

- Maintain and protect natural resources, such as clean air and water, wildlife habitat areas, mineral resource areas, agricultural land, national forest land, parks and open space areas, and recreational areas.
- Preserve open space areas that provide valuable recreational, scenic and biological resources for County residents.
- Acquire open space and limit development in rural areas.

#### **Protect Against Natural and Manmade Hazards**

- Create programs to provide current and improved hazard-related information, and strengthen development review procedures and standards.



Vasquez Rocks, Open Space



Metro Rail Gold Line

## V. IMPLEMENTING THE GENERAL PLAN

The General Plan is primarily designed to assist decision-makers and the general public with land use planning and infrastructure/service management. It also provides guidance for policy and program development throughout the County, which is planned for and implemented by a variety of departments, agencies, commissions, and community groups. The General Plan also puts forth several strategies and action items for the implementation of its goals and policies.

While the General Plan was written by the Department of Regional Planning, the implementation of the Plan is the responsibility of the entire County, its many departments, and its agencies. In Los Angeles County, the General Plan is especially useful to the Board of Supervisors and the Regional Planning Commission, both of whom are charged with implementing this adopted policy document.

While writing the General Plan's Implementation Actions, County staff consulted with various County agencies to produce implementation measures that maximize collaboration

and facilitate short-term, strategic actions to help realize the long-range intent of the General Plan. The implementation actions are listed after their relevant set of goals and policies in the last section of each Element. A comprehensive list and timeline of all General Plan implementation action can be found in Appendix I.

## VI. LOS ANGELES COUNTY GENERAL PLAN: PLANNING TOMORROW'S GREAT PLACES

The updated Los Angeles County General Plan arrives at an opportune time. The landscape for how planning and development activities take place in the County is undergoing profound changes. Extreme environmental conditions, such as water shortages and wildfires, require that County officials develop and build in ways that differ from past practices, promote environmental sustainability, and maximize public safety. The high cost of housing and development, and the absence of available land have also affected planning practices in the County, as mixed use development, infill development and transit corridor planning replace sprawling growth patterns.

### Sustainability

The primary theme of the County General Plan, and the ultimate goal of all of its policy actions, is to achieve sustainability. Sustainability is a simple concept that involves the utilization of planning practices that ensure people's needs



Downtown Los Angeles

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Renewable Energy and Conservation

in the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their economic, social, and environmental needs. The County is committed to utilizing and promoting land use policies that achieve sustainability, and to implementing practices that promote healthy, livable, and sustainable communities.

The General Plan addresses sustainability on a regional level by increasing its attention to environmental protection and by making long-range changes to the regulations that govern planning and development activities. For example, the Department of Regional Planning is working closely with staff from the Department of Public Works to implement operational practices to the County Code that require low-impact development standards that manage stormwater runoff, and building code changes that use green-building techniques to conserve water and energy.

Furthermore, the General Plan also promotes sustainability at the community and neighborhood level. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development Rating System was created by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) to develop a national set of standards for neighborhood development and design that is based on smart growth principles, environmental sustainability, and the building of healthy and livable communities. These standards were created to accomplish a set of goals that are similar to those in the County's General Plan: revitalize urban areas, reduce land consumption,

reduce automobile dependence, promote pedestrian safety and accessibility, improve air quality, decrease stormwater runoff, and build more livable, sustainable communities for people of all income levels. Adhering to these standards, the Los Angeles County General Plan provides policies to achieve all of these goals and meet the sustainability benchmarks as outlined by the LEED Neighborhood Development Rating System.

The County recognizes that achieving countywide sustainability will involve shifts in policy that will be initiated and implemented over many years. The Los Angeles County General Plan will also be just one instrument in the County's endeavors to achieve sustainability. But as the guiding policy document for land use in the County, the Los Angeles County General Plan: *Planning Tomorrow's Great Places* will lead the way for the sustainable planning and development actions of the future.





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# Chapter 2

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# BACKGROUND

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Background Chapter is to describe the natural, rural, and urban characteristics of unincorporated Los Angeles County. Following this description is a summary of the County’s current demographic data, which looks at statistics and projections related to population, housing, and employment. From this data, the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) formulated a broad list of planning assumptions that were used to shape the goals, policies, and implementation programs for the General Plan.

## II. LOCATION AND COUNTY DESCRIPTION

Los Angeles County is geographically one of the largest counties in the nation with approximately 4,083 square miles. The County stretches along 75 miles of the Pacific Coast of Southern California, and is bordered to the east by Orange and San Bernardino Counties, to the north by Kern County, and to the west by Ventura County. Los Angeles County also includes the offshore islands of Santa Catalina and San Clemente. **Figure 2.1** shows the regional location of Los Angeles County.

### The County Setting

The unincorporated areas account for approximately 65% of the total Los Angeles County land area, as seen in **Table 2.1**.

The unincorporated areas of the County cover a large geographic area and are ecologically and climatically diverse. A truly unique aspect of planning in the County is the non-contiguous nature of the County’s jurisdiction. The unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County consist of 124 separate, non-contiguous land areas. The unincorporated areas in the northern part of the County are covered by large amounts of sparsely populated land and include the Angeles National Forest, a portion of the Los Padres National Forest, and the Mojave Desert. The unincorporated areas in the southern part of the County consist of 58 pockets of unconnected communities, often referred to as the County’s unincorporated “urban islands”.

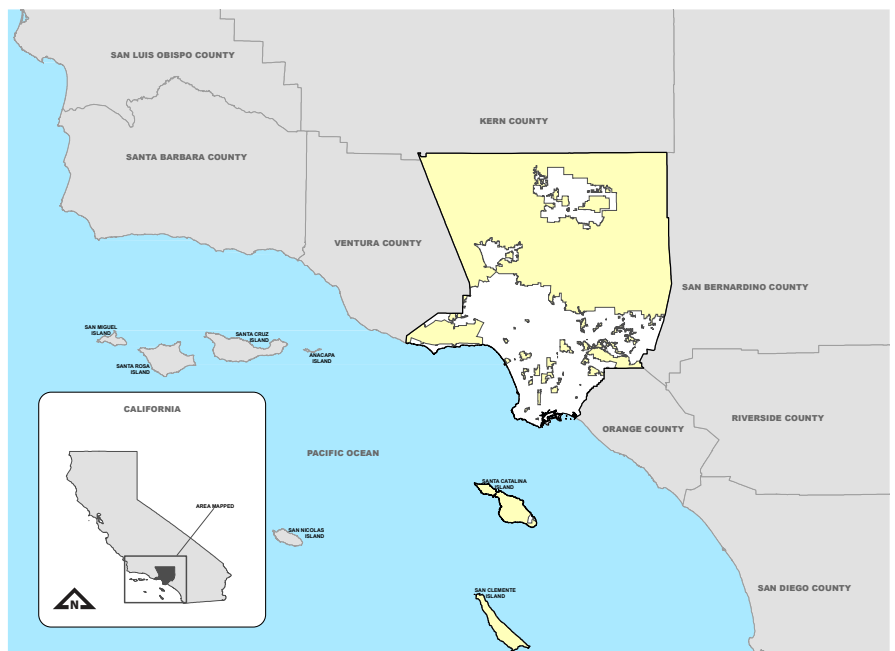


Figure 2.1: Regional Location of L.A. County

**Table 2.1: L.A. County Distribution of Land Area**

County Land Components	Cities (sq. miles)	Unincorporated (sq. miles)	Total (sq. miles)
Mainland	1,423.7	2,528.3	3,952.0
San Clemente Island	0.0	56.4	56.4
Santa Catalina Island	2.9	71.9	74.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,426.6</b>	<b>2,656.6</b>	<b>4,083.2</b>

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

Los Angeles County is divided into five (5) supervisorial districts. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, created by the state Legislature in 1852, is the governing body for the County. Five supervisors are elected to four-year terms by voters within their respective districts. The Board has executive, legislative, and quasi-judicial roles. It appoints all department heads other than the assessor, district attorney, and sheriff, which are also elected positions.

Figure 2.2 displays the unincorporated areas of the County, and Figure 2.3 depicts the County's five (5) Supervisorial Districts.

## Defining Characteristics

The following discussion categorizes the unincorporated areas of the County by defining characteristics and/or natural elements. There is a high level of diversity among the communities and their natural features within each geographic area of the County. The purpose of these descriptions is to familiarize readers with the diversity of the various communities under the County's jurisdiction.

### Northern Los Angeles County

The northern part of the County contains the largest amount of unincorporated County land, and is generally defined as the land between the Ventura and San Bernardino County lines, and from the Kern County line in the north stretching southward to the San Gabriel Mountains. This area includes large sections of the Mojave Desert, the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests, and contains most of the remaining agricultural land in Los Angeles County. Additionally, Edwards Air Force Base, which straddles the Los Angeles County and Kern County border, consists of 79,000 acres of land along the north County border.

This area has seen the most growth and annexation over the last 20 years, such as the incorporation of the City of Santa Clarita and the expansion of the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster. Despite the rural nature of the area, significant urbanization can be seen in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys. There are four (4) major new planned communities under development in this area: Northlake, Fair Oaks Ranch, Newhall Ranch, and Centennial. The key planning issues in these areas include the loss of open space to development, strains on over-extended public services, and the environmental impacts related to long commuting patterns to and from the Los Angeles basin.

### Western Los Angeles County

The western and coastal parts of unincorporated Los Angeles County include the Santa Monica Mountains Region and the offshore coastal zones that stretch along the Pacific Ocean. This area contains some of the most scenic parts of the County, including the Santa Monica Mountain National

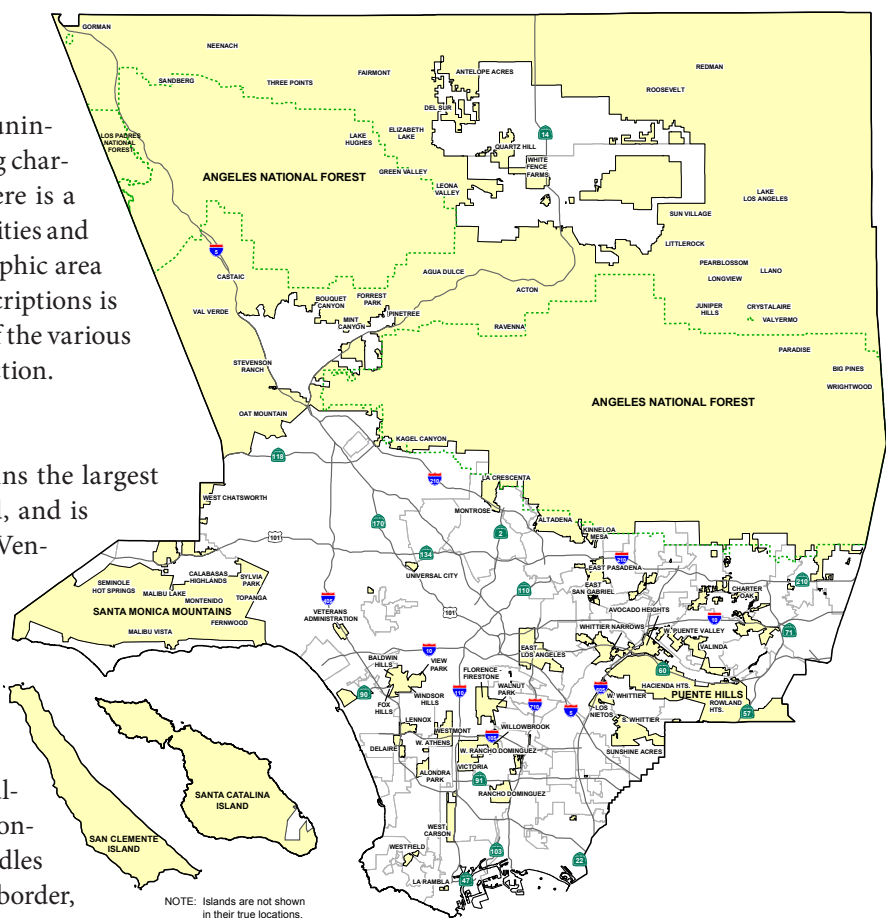


Figure 2.2: Unincorporated Areas of L.A. County

Recreation Area. Because of its natural amenities and proximity to urban areas, development in this area is often seen as controversial. The unincorporated areas include land that is preserved for open space and regional parks, small rural communities, and growing communities such as Las Virgenes. Santa Catalina Island, which outside of the City of Avalon is managed almost entirely by the Catalina Island Conservancy, and San Clemente Island, which is wholly owned and operated by the U.S. Navy, are located in the County's two offshore coastal zones.

There are also a handful of diverse unincorporated pockets located south of the Santa Monica Mountains that are very distinct from other County areas. These pockets include Marina del Rey, a highly developed coastal community south of the City of Santa Monica, the Ladera Heights/Baldwin Hills, Lennox, Del Aire and Alondra Park neighborhoods, and the large Veterans Administration complex that straddles I-405 near Westwood. The Baldwin Hills, with the Kenneth B. Hahn State Park, and the marina facilities at Marina del Rey provide many recreational opportunities for area residents.

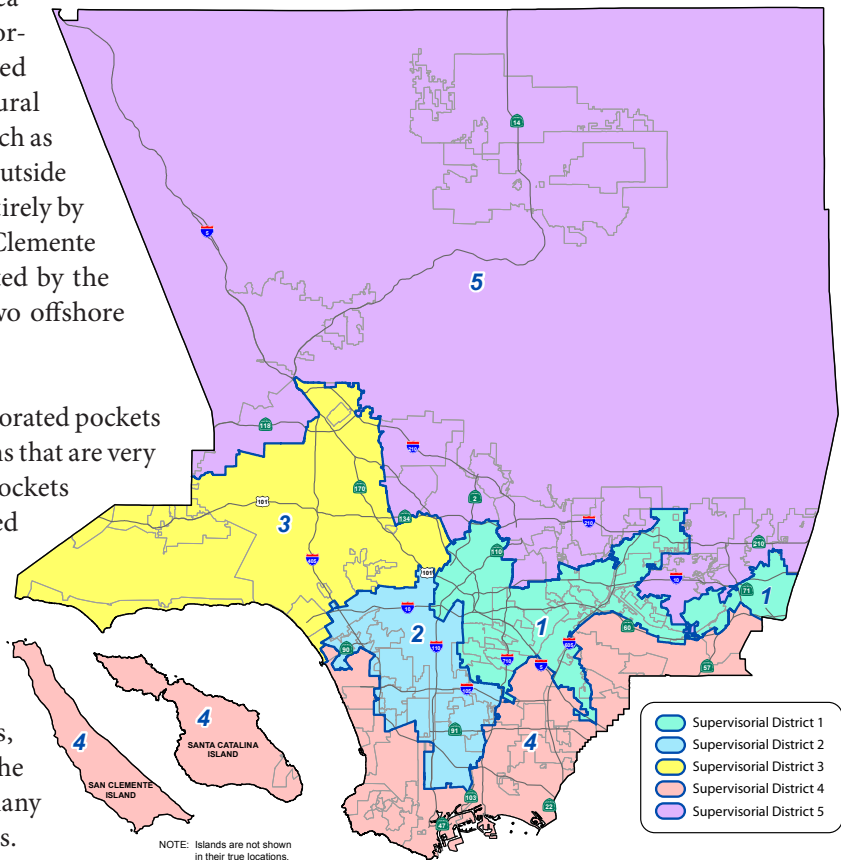


Figure 2.3: L.A. County Supervisorial Districts

### Southern Los Angeles County

The southern part of the County includes Los Angeles basin communities that are highly urbanized, very dense, and are generally characterized by challenging physical and economic conditions. These urban pockets include the communities of Florence-Firestone, Willowbrook, West Rancho Dominguez, Westmont, West Athens, East Compton and West Carson. There are very few natural areas and open spaces in the southern basin, and these communities have disproportionate amounts of industrial land uses. The principal planning concerns in this area are the incompatibility of industrial and residential land uses, the need to attract new investment, businesses and jobs, and basic services and infrastructure, such as grocery stores.

### East Los Angeles County

There are a few urban pockets adjacent to the Gateway Cities that line the eastern border of the City of Los Angeles. This area, which includes the West Whittier community, is urban and largely residential. The critical challenges facing these communities are their aging housing stock and lack of economic investment.

The eastern parts of the County are comprised of East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley communities. East Los Angeles is located just east of downtown Los Angeles. It is home to a diverse mix of residential and commercial uses and is an older, denser, and more established community compared with other unincorporated areas. This area is heavily influenced by the majority Hispanic community, and its connections to the economy of the City of Los Angeles. The expansion of the Metro Gold Line into East Los Angeles presents the community with many development and planning opportunities, such as transit-oriented development.



All General Plan Figures Can Be Found on the  
DRP Website at [planning.lacounty.gov/maps](http://planning.lacounty.gov/maps)



**Table 2.2: L.A. County Population Estimates, 2000-2006.**

County	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Unincorporated</b>	986,050	1,004,301	1,026,047	1,045,549	1,063,148	1,079,245	1,092,908
<b>Incorporated</b>	8,533,280	8,658,942	8,803,068	8,933,923	9,025,786	9,087,172	9,152,664
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,519,330</b>	<b>9,663,243</b>	<b>9,829,115</b>	<b>9,979,472</b>	<b>10,088,934</b>	<b>10,166,417</b>	<b>10,245,572</b>

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2006.

### San Gabriel Valley

There are several pockets of unincorporated communities that line the San Gabriel Valley, south of the San Gabriel Mountains and north of the Puente Hills. Like East Los Angeles, many of the communities in this area are older, denser and more established than their northern counterparts and they are culturally influenced by their large Hispanic and Asian populations. The San Gabriel Valley communities are widely diverse in terms of housing stock, development patterns, and the amount of industry in each community. Some areas in the eastern part of the County, like Hacienda Heights and Rowland Heights, are newer bedroom communities that line the scenic Puente Hills, while other areas are characterized by a much older housing stock or are primarily industrial. Following the North County, the San Gabriel Valley is experiencing the most rapid growth in the County.



Cultural Diversity Mural

**Table 2.3: Percent Change in Population for L.A. County, 2000-2006.**

Year	Unincorporated Population	Percent Change	Total County Population	Percent Change
<b>2000</b>	986,050	-	9,519,330	-
<b>2001</b>	1,004,301	1.85	9,663,243	1.51
<b>2002</b>	1,026,047	2.17	9,829,115	1.72
<b>2003</b>	1,045,549	1.90	9,979,472	1.53
<b>2004</b>	1,063,148	1.68	10,088,934	1.10
<b>2005</b>	1,079,245	1.51	10,166,417	0.77
<b>2006</b>	1,092,908	1.27	10,245,572	0.78

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, E-4 Population Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State, 2001-2006, with 2000 Benchmark. Sacramento, California, May 2006.

## III. DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the General Plan documents the current demographic and economic conditions in unincorporated Los Angeles County. This data was used to identify important demographic and social trends that helped shape the goals and policies of the General Plan. The demographics section utilizes statistics from the Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance, which is designated as the single official source of demographic data for state planning and budgeting. Additional data are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

### Current Population Estimates

Tables 2.2 and 2.3 show the population estimates for Los Angeles County, and the percent change in population for the years 2000-2006. Both the unincorporated areas and the County as a whole have experienced steady population growth. However, as seen in Table 2.3, the percentage of change in population over the last six years has been higher in the unincorporated areas when compared to the County at large.

**Table 2.4: Population by County for SCAG Region, 1990-2000.**

County	1990 Population	2000 Population	Percent Increase
Los Angeles	8,863,164	9,519,338	+ 07.4%
Orange	2,410,556	2,846,289	+ 18.1%
San Bernardino	1,418,380	1,709,434	+ 20.5%
Riverside	1,170,413	1,545,387	+ 32.0%
Ventura	669,016	753,197	+ 12.6%
Imperial	109,303	142,361	+ 30.2%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

**Table 2.5: Racial/Ethnic Composition of Unincorporated L.A. County, 2000.**

Race / Ethnicity	Population	Percent
Hispanic	525,903	53.3%
White	239,580	24.3%
African American	103,504	10.5%
Asian	95,814	9.7%
Native American	2,714	0.3%
Native Hawaiian	1,802	0.2%
Other	1,617	0.2%
Two or More Races	16,603	1.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>987,537</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census

## Regional Context

For a broader perspective, a review of regional population data is informative. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is a regional planning agency for the six-county Southern California area, which includes Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Imperial, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties. **Table 2.4** shows population growth in all of the SCAG counties between 1990 and 2000. Although Los Angeles County had the slowest rate of growth of all of the SCAG counties during that period, it remains by far the most populous.

## Racial and Ethnic Composition

In addition to being the most populous county in the SCAG region, Los Angeles County is also the most diverse. The cultural variety of residents in Los Angeles County plays a significant role in defining the character of the unincorporated communities. Influenced by migratory patterns, the roughly ten million residents of the County comprise one of the most diverse regions in the United States.

The Demographic Research Unit of the California Department of Finance estimates that by the year 2050, the Hispanic and Asian populations will account for more than 80% of the residents in the County. Any effort to guide future planning endeavors must recognize and respect the diversity and social values that accompany these demographic shifts. **Table 2.5** shows the racial and ethnic make-up of the unincorporated County population.

## IV. PROJECTIONS

This section of the General Plan provides projections that estimate future demographic and economic conditions based upon a variety of informed assumptions and scenarios. Projections play a critical role in the planning process and are tools that can help guide future development patterns in the County. The growth projections contained in this Chapter are based on the best information the County is able to obtain, provides a picture of probable occurrences rather than assured outcomes, and whose accuracy is independent of unforeseen future events.

This section focuses on population, housing, and employment projections that are based on the SCAG 2008 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). As the designated Southern California Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO),



LA County's Next Generation

**Table 2.6: Unincorporated L.A. County Population Projections**

Subregion	2005	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	20,395	23,443	3,048	15.0%
City of Los Angeles	57,235	64,837	7,602	13.3%
Gateway Cities	342,956	382,816	39,860	11.6%
Las Virgenes	21,341	30,529	9,188	43.1%
North L.A. County	132,797	389,595	256,798	193.4%
San Gabriel Valley	364,836	500,358	135,522	37.1%
South Bay Cities	117,449	131,191	13,742	12.4%
Westside Cities	29,068	39,214	10,146	34.9%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,086,077</b>	<b>1,561,983</b>	<b>475,906</b>	<b>44.0%</b>

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections.

## Population Projections

Table 2.6 shows the unincorporated County's population projections based on SCAG's forecasts for 2030.

SCAG projects that unincorporated Los Angeles County's population will continue to grow, resulting in a 44% increase in population by the year 2030. The rate of population growth will vary greatly among each subregion. For example, the North Los Angeles County subregion, which includes both the Santa Clarita Valley and Antelope Valley unincorporated areas, is expected to grow by

SCAG is mandated by the federal government to research and draw up plans for transportation, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality issues.

approximately 250,000 people (193.4%) by the year 2030. In contrast, the urban South Bay Cities subregion is projected to have a relatively lower population change of 12.4% over

As part of the methodology for the 2008 RTP projections, SCAG requested local jurisdictions to provide feedback on their community statistics in order to improve the accuracy of SCAG's projections. The Department of Regional Planning conducted a systematic review of unincorporated areas to account for unique land use characteristics, including availability of vacant and underutilized land, land suitability, transportation networks, and redevelopment potential.

## SCAG Subregions

In this section, projections are organized according to SCAG's eight subregions, which collectively encompass all of the County's unincorporated areas. The subregions, shown in Figure 2.4, include:

- Arroyo Verdugo;
- City of Los Angeles;
- Gateway Cities;
- Las Virgenes;
- North Los Angeles County;
- San Gabriel Valley;
- South Bay Cities; and,
- Westside Cities.

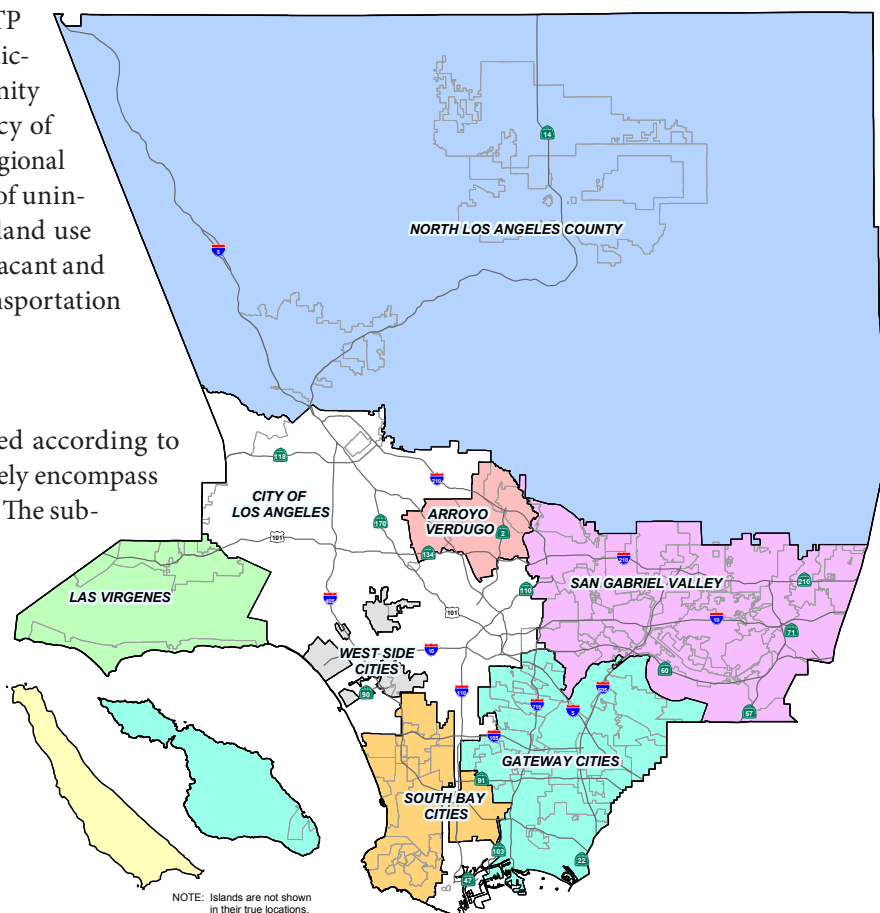


Figure 2.4: L.A. County Subregions as Designated by SCAG

**Table 2.7: Unincorporated L.A. County Household Projections**

Subregion	2000	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	7,304	8,343	1,039	14.2%
City of Los Angeles	13,685	15,445	1,760	12.9%
Gateway Cities	82,041	99,353	17,312	21.1%
Las Virgenes	7,105	9,872	2,767	38.9%
North L.A. County	39,331	119,114	79,783	202.9%
San Gabriel Valley	99,301	138,128	38,827	39.1%
South Bay Cities	32,775	36,802	4,027	12.3%
Westside Cities	13,246	16,357	3,111	23.5%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>294,788</b>	<b>443,414</b>	<b>148,626</b>	<b>50.4%</b>

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections.

the same period. These trends are important to identify so that County agencies can better prepare for future development, guide development toward more suitable areas, focus services where most needed, and address issues related to overcrowding, housing shortages, and recreational needs.

### Household Projections

Household estimates are an important indicator of the growing demand for all types of housing in the County. **Table 2.7** displays the projected number of households for the unincorporated County subregions based on SCAG's projections for 2030.

SCAG's household projections indicate a net increase of 148,626 households by the year 2030. The General Plan promotes accommodating these additional households through increasing density in appropriate areas to compensate for the County's dwindling supply of developable land, and to protect its remaining farmland, natural resources, and open spaces. The justification for several policies in the General Plan, such as supporting transit-oriented development and providing density bonuses for affordable housing development, are based on these projected increases in the number of new households. The Housing Element provides a comprehensive analysis of the unincorporated County's housing needs and future plans for housing-

related planning activities. The 2008 Housing Element can be found at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/housing>

### Employment Projections

Los Angeles County is situated at the center of a highly developed and diversified industrial-based economy. Major features of the economy include: one of the world's largest concentrations of high technology industry supported by many advanced research and educational institutions; a high proportion of employment concentrated in services, trades and professions; and the world's fifth busiest seaport (the

combination of the adjacent Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach). Historically, the County's economic base has adapted to rapid innovation and change, and has placed an emphasis on education and research as economic activities.

The economy and regional job market of Los Angeles County is large and increasingly diversified. The economic base of the Southern California region consists of professional services, diversified manufacturing activities, transportation and wholesale trade, tourism and entertainment, and defense-related and resource-based industries. In addition to strong manufacturing, services and trade sectors, the County has developed into a center of international business and finance. The Economic Development Element of the General Plan provides a detailed discussion of the County's economy and the land use issues related

“Fast-forward to 2030. Imagine a Los Angeles County with almost three million residents over age 60, up from 1.4 million today. One in every four neighbors will be older. What will be their quality of life? What services must we as a society provide now to assist and support them? As Los Angeles County's population ages, pressure builds to assure the right local services exist to preserve older residents' healthy independence and to mitigate potential problems as they age.

*-L.A. County Seniors Count!  
County of Los Angeles, Community and Senior Services*



to economic development. **Table 2.8** shows employment projections for unincorporated Los Angeles County based on SCAG forecasts.

The largest growth in jobs is expected to be in the North L.A. County sub-region (125.0%), the same area that is expected to see the most population growth and housing construction. The General Plan considers these trends important, and the data shapes County goals and policies that promote healthy and sustainable communities that provide a high quality of life for County residents and businesses.

## V. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

Using the data compiled from the demographic analysis of the unincorporated County areas, several planning assumptions were formulated to aid the development of the goals, policies, and implementation programs contained in the General Plan Elements. The following planning assumptions have been organized by the three areas of demographic analysis (population, housing, and employment), and one section for the environment.

### Population

- There will be continued population growth county-wide with a disproportionate amount of growth being concentrated in the North County.
- The County will continue to see a complex pattern of migration and immigration that will present cultural and age-specific planning opportunities and constraints.
- The Hispanic composition of the population will continue to increase.
- Development to accommodate population growth will continue to mount pressures to convert open space areas into non-open space uses.
- The need to balance population growth with environmental concerns will be increasingly important in planning actions.

**Table 2.8: Unincorporated L.A. County Employment Projections**

Subregion	2000	2030	Number Change	Percent Change
Arroyo Verdugo	3,844	4,082	238	6.2%
City of Los Angeles	24,820	26,785	1,965	7.9%
Gateway Cities	83,435	93,006	9,571	11.5%
Las Virgenes	16,277	17,854	1,577	9.7%
North L.A. County	34,592	77,831	43,239	125.0%
San Gabriel Valley	98,834	112,084	13,250	13.4%
South Bay Cities	20,346	21,767	1,421	7.0%
Westside Cities	17,637	18,459	822	4.7%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>299,785</b>	<b>371,868</b>	<b>72,083</b>	<b>24.0%</b>

Source: 2008 SCAG RTP Projections

- Specific incentives and land use strategies must guide development toward infill areas, existing urban infrastructure, and along public transit corridors in accordance with SCAG's Compass Blueprint 2% Strategy.

### Housing

- Housing demand, especially for affordable housing, will remain high.
- Affordable housing in the County will include low income housing, low-median income housing, and workforce housing.
- Consistent housing construction will be needed to keep pace with the County's expected rate of population growth.
- Development activities will be most aggressive in the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley areas.
- There will be a continued decrease in land available for new housing throughout the County coupled with a continued increase in pressure to preserve open space and agricultural land.
- Higher density housing is needed to balance shortages of land for development and the increasing needs for housing and commerce.

### Employment

- Los Angeles County will continue to be a major regional economic center.
- Existing employment trends are likely to continue.
- The region will continue to lose manufacturing jobs while seeing an increase in jobs related to professional and business services and trade.



- The County will need to promote and maintain a diversified economy in order ensure a healthy and sustainable economic future.
- The County will need to better train its workforce in order to be prepared for future job growth and changes in the economy.
- Commercial and industrial activities will continually need to be refined, improved, and balanced with residential sectors.
- Infrastructure and commerce needs will continue to be important to the County and will require the attention of various County agencies and officials.
- Communities throughout unincorporated Los Angeles County face unique and diverse economic conditions and challenges.
- Development pressure to convert industrial lands to other uses will continue.
- The amount of trading and cargo activity at the Ports will continue to grow, causing increased impacts on the regions environment and transportation system.
- The challenge as to how to balance growth and the environment will be increasingly important in planning decisions.
- Existing parks will be burdened by a lack of neighborhood parks and open space to serve a growing population.
- Environmental conditions and environmental regulations will continue the pressure to introduce and utilize new technologies and green techniques, such as green-building, low impact development and alternative energy sources.
- Attention to water supply, water quality regulations and climate conditions will be critical planning issues related to global warming.
- Global warming, air quality concerns, and federal and state legislation will affect land use and transportation policies in the County.

### Environment

- The County will continue to see environmental issues arising from growth, transportation, and economic activities.
- Development will continue to mount pressures to convert open space areas into non-open space uses.



Development at the Urban Fringe

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# Chapter 3

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# LAND USE ELEMENT

Source: Pictometry International Corp

## I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Section 65302(a) of the Government Code, the Land Use Element of the General Plan identifies the goals and policies that guide the distribution, general location, and extent of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, and other uses of land in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

The Land Use Element ensures a compatible balance of land uses to meet the diverse needs of the unincorporated communities in the County. Equally important, the Land Use Element provides planning tools, such as land use policy maps, as well as land use policy strategies, that will coordinate future development and revitalization efforts in the County. The Element's principal intent is to be visionary, flexible, and sustainability-focused.

## II. BACKGROUND

How communities use land within their boundaries is referred to as land use policy. Effective land use policy adapts to fast-changing environmental, social and economic conditions. The General Plan is the foundation for all of the land uses that occur in the unincorporated County, and provides the framework for how the County will plan for and address the numerous land use challenges it faces. The Land Use Element also utilizes short-term programs and long-term strategies to provide flexible and comprehensive guidelines for dealing with County land use decisions and future development scenarios.

### Land Use Plans

The County utilizes several types of community-based plans that comprise the General Plan. They are: Area Plans, Community Plans, Neighborhood Plans, Local Plans, Local Coastal Plans, and Specific Plans. The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) has overseen the creation of several community-based plans that encompass many of the unincorporated communities in the County.

**Figure 3.1** is a map of the unincorporated areas of the County that currently have a community-based plan. Following is a list of the community-based plans currently utilized by the County, including their dates of adoption. All of these plans can be found at the Department's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/luz.htm>.

### Area Plans

Area plans are used for large, continuous areas of the County and allow for comprehensive and detailed planning, as well as for planning in coordination with adjacent cities. The County currently has three adopted Area Plans, and efforts are underway to update the Antelope Valley Area Plan and the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan, a joint collaboration with the City of Santa Clarita called *One Valley, One Vision*:

- **Antelope Valley Area Plan** (Adopted 1986);
- **Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan** (Adopted 1990); and,
- **Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan** (Adopted 2000).

### Community and Neighborhood Plans

Community plans generally cover smaller geographic areas, even though a community plan area such as East Los Angeles may have a far greater population than that of some Area Plans. Typically community groups, looking for more detailed planning in their communities or for the resolution of a specific land use issue, initiate the preparation of





Hacienda Heights Community Plan Update

a Community Plan. There are currently eight adopted Community and Neighborhood Plans in the County and efforts are underway to update the Hacienda Heights Community Plan. A transit-oriented district (TOD) for East Los Angeles is also being developed to coincide with the expansion of the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) Light Rail Gold Line, which will preface the update of the East Los Angeles Community Plan:

- **Hacienda Heights Community Plan** (Adopted 1978);
- **Rowland Heights Community Plan** (Adopted 1981);
- **Diamond Bar Community Plan** (Adopted 1982);
- **Altadena Community Plan** (Adopted 1986);
- **Walnut Park Neighborhood Plan** (Adopted 1987);
- **East Los Angeles Community Plan** (Adopted 1988);
- **West Athens/Westmont Community Plan** (Adopted 1990); and,
- **Twin Lakes Community Plan** (Adopted 1991).

#### Local Plans and Local Coastal Plans

Land use regulation within areas defined as Coastal Zones includes the additional authoritative power of the California Coastal Commission.

The California Coastal Commission has final approval of projects within

designated Coastal Zones unless a jurisdiction completes a certified Local Coastal Program (LCP). An LCP is comprised of a Land Use Plan and a Local Implementation Plan (LIP). There are three adopted Local Coastal and Land Use Plans in the County. The Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Plan, scheduled for adoption in 2008, will replace the Malibu Local Coastal Plan:

- **Santa Catalina Island Local Coastal Plan** (Adopted 1983);
- **Marina Del Rey Land Use Plan** (Adopted 1996);
- **Malibu Local Coastal Plan** (Adopted 1986); and,
- **Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Plan** (Expected Adoption 2008).

#### Specific Plans

Specific plans are often used for large planning projects, as well as for handling complicated sites with environmental and fiscal constraints. A Specific Plan enables the County to assemble, in one package, a set of land use specifications and

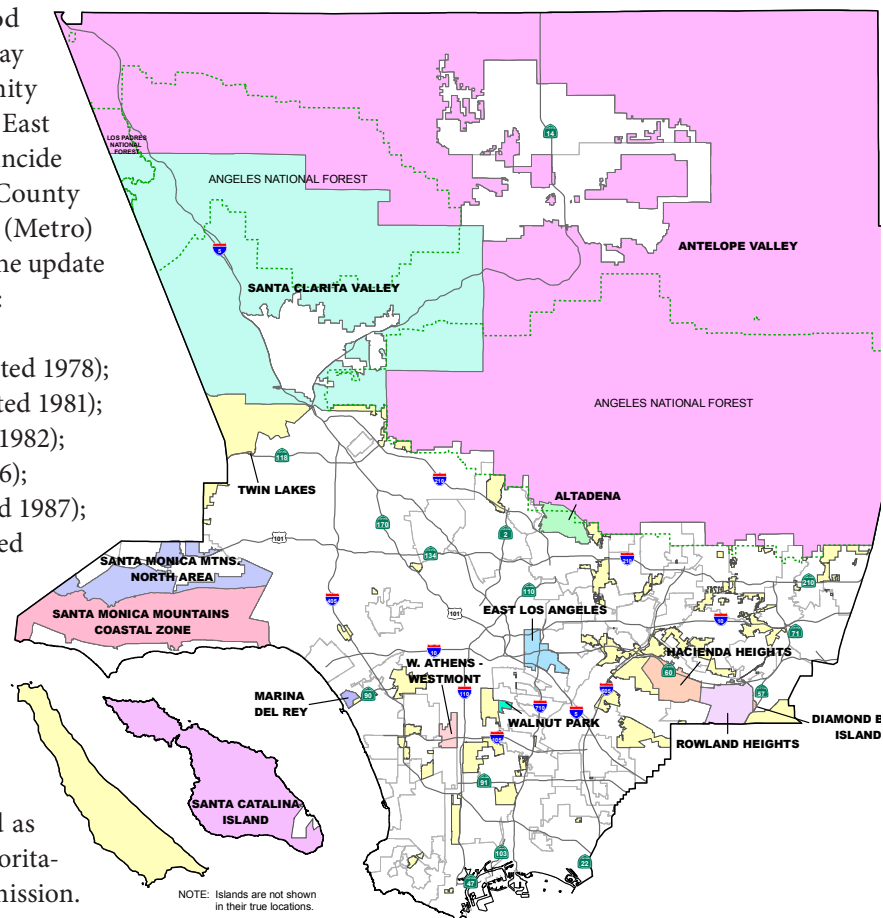


Figure 3.1: Community-Based Plans in Unincorporated L.A. County



Geographically Constrained Development

implementation programs tailored to the unique characteristics of a particular site. There are currently five adopted Specific Plans in the County:

- **Fair Oaks Ranch** (Santa Clarita Valley) (Adopted 1986);
- **Canyon Park** (Santa Clarita Valley) (Adopted 1986);
- **La Vina** (Altadena) (Adopted 1989);
- **Northlake** (Santa Clarita Valley) (Adopted 1993); and,
- **Newhall Ranch** (Santa Clarita Valley) (Adopted 1999).

conditions for development and the general standards for permitted uses within each zoning district can be found in Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code.

### III. COUNTY LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

The following section describes the general land use designations that express land use policy and guide development activities in the communities without a community-based plan. The following land use designations (summarized in **Table 3.1**) make up the land use legend for the County land use policy maps for these communities. This land use legend represents the county-wide land use designation and will be used for the General Plan and all community-based plans as they are created or updated

Additionally, each section contains a summary table that presents the County's land use designations and their corresponding consistent zoning districts. Further details on



Land Use and Zoning Affect Community Character

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**Table 3.1: L.A. County Land Use Categories**

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Intended Uses
<b>Rural</b>			
Agriculture	<b>AG</b>	10 acre minimum	Identifies and establishes areas suitable for agricultural land uses.
Rural Lands-1	<b>RL1</b>	Maximum 1 du/1 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
Rural Lands-2	<b>RL2</b>	Maximum 1 du/2 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
Rural Lands-5	<b>RL5</b>	Maximum 1 du/5 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
Rural Lands-10	<b>RL10</b>	Maximum 1 du/10 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
Rural Lands-20	<b>RL20</b>	Maximum 1 du/20 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
Rural Lands-40	<b>RL40</b>	Maximum 1 du/40 ac	Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, other rural activities, and appropriate local serving, ancillary commercial uses.
<b>Residential</b>			
Large Lot Residential	<b>H2</b>	0-2 du/ac	Single family detached
Suburban Residential	<b>H5</b>	0-5 du/ac	Single family detached
Suburban High Density Residential	<b>H9</b>	0-9 du/ac	Single family detached, single family attached, town homes, duplexes
Medium Density Residential	<b>H18</b>	9-18 du/ac	Town homes, duplexes, multi-family
Urban Residential	<b>H30</b>	18-30 du/ac	Low rise, multi-family residential buildings
Urban Medium Residential	<b>H50</b>	30-50 du/ac	Medium-rise, multi-family residential buildings
High-rise Residential	<b>H75</b>	50-75 du/ac	High-rise, multi-story multi-family dwellings
<b>Commercial</b>			
Rural Commercial	<b>CR</b>	70% lot coverage, 35ft height limit	Provides sites for commercial and personal services compatible to agricultural, rural and recreational activities.
Neighborhood Commercial	<b>CN</b>	75% lot coverage, 35ft height limit	Local serving commercial, office and professional businesses, retail and service establishments.
Major Commercial	<b>CM</b>	90% lot coverage, 55ft height limit	Large, retail and destination shopping areas, tourist and recreation related commercial services, hotels, and amusement activities.

Table 3.1: L.A. County Land Use Categories

Land Use	Code	Permitted Density or FAR	Intended Uses
<b>Industrial</b>			
Rural Industrial	<b>IR</b>	85% lot coverage, no height limit	Provides sites for industrial uses compatible to agricultural and rural activities.
Light Industrial	<b>IL</b>	90% lot coverage, 35ft height limit	Identifies and establishes areas suitable for light industrial and industrial park activities, and small accessory uses.
Heavy Industrial	<b>IH</b>	90% lot coverage, no height limit	Identifies and establishes areas suitable for heavy industrial activities that are intense in nature and have the potential to generate major environmental concerns, such as noise or dust.
Office and Professional	<b>IO</b>	90% lot coverage, 55 ft. height limit	Includes major office and business uses, and other employee intensive uses, such as technology and research centers, corporate headquarters, and clean industry hubs.
<b>Public</b>			
Public and Semi-Public Facilities	<b>P</b>	N/A	Provides areas for the appropriate development and presence of a variety of public and semi-public facilities, infrastructure and their related grounds.
Transportation Corridor	<b>TC</b>	N/A	Freeway or rail corridor right-of-way where little to no development activity is allowed.
Military Land	<b>ML</b>	N/A	Military bases and land controlled by U.S. Department of Defense.
<b>Open Space</b>			
Open Space Conservation	<b>OS-C</b>	N/A	Provides for the protection of open space areas and scenic resource preservation. Can include passive trail networks.
Open Space Parks and Recreation	<b>OS-PR</b>	N/A	Includes open space areas for recreational uses, such as regional and local parks, trails, athletic fields, community gardens, golf courses, cemeteries, and other open spaces.
Open Space National Forest	<b>OS-NF</b>	N/A	Applies to the Angeles National Forest and Los Padres National Forest areas under the supervision of the National Forest Service.
Bureau of Land Management	<b>OS-BLM</b>	N/A	Applies to all land under the specific regulations of the Federal Bureau of Land Management.
Water	<b>OS-W</b>	N/A	Includes bodies of water such as lakes, reservoirs, natural waterways, and man-made infrastructure such as drainage channels, and spillways.
Mineral Resources	<b>OS-MR</b>	N/A	Includes mineral extraction sites, and areas that are protected for mineral extraction activities.
<b>Overlays</b>			
Mixed Use	<b>MU</b>	N/A	Identifies areas that are encouraged for mixed use development with associated incentives and development bonuses to be determined by individual implementing ordinances.
Transit-Oriented Development	<b>TOD</b>	N/A	Identifies areas that have been designated Transit-Oriented Districts with associated incentives and development bonuses as determined by their area specific implementing ordinances.
SEAs	<b>SEA</b>	N/A	Identifies areas that have been designated Significant Ecological Areas.
Hillside Management	<b>HM</b>	N/A	Identifies areas that are covered under the Hillside Management Ordinance with slopes 25 percent and higher.
<b>Other</b>			
Specific Plans	<b>SP</b>	N/A	Large, mixed-use developments and planned communities that are developed in phases or all at once by a single developer.

## A. RURAL

Rural land use designations provide appropriately located areas for a variety of agricultural activities, agricultural production, associated housing for agricultural activities, resort recreation, equestrian uses, single-family homes, service establishments, and other related rural activities that maintain the character of and serve rural areas.

The land use designations under Rural are Agriculture, Rural Lands 1, Rural Lands 2, Rural Land 5, Rural Lands 10, Rural Lands 20, and Rural Lands 40:

### Agriculture (AG)

#### *Purpose*

Identifies and establishes areas suitable for agricultural uses, agricultural production, and associated housing for agricultural activities. The agricultural designations can:

- Provide lands suitable for commercial and subsistence agricultural production;
- Produce row and field crops, dry crops, orchards and vineyards, grazing, and other related agricultural activities;
- Provide buffering for adjacent non-agricultural uses;
- Provide housing opportunities for permanent and temporary farm workers; and,
- Provide areas for suitable support services for agricultural business;

#### *Locational Criteria*

- Underdeveloped areas that are generally adjacent or distant to urban areas; and,
- Areas where agriculture is in use, has traditionally been located, or has been identified as prime areas for agricultural production.

#### *Intensity of Use*

10-acre minimum lot size and applicable zoning requirements.

### Rural Land (RL1, RL2, RL5, RL10, RL20, and RL40)

#### *Purpose*

The intent of lands designated as Rural is to maintain the character of the small communities and rural areas of low-intensity uses within the unincorporated areas of the County. Rural areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include mountain, foothill, and high desert areas, as well as rural communities that are served by a non-urban level of



Agriculture

commercial uses and public facilities, and are expected to experience the most growth pressures from urban expansion. The Rural designations:

- Provide lands suitable for agricultural production;
- Preserve areas of significant natural and scenic resources; and,
- Limit intensive development of areas subject to natural hazards or lacking in essential services and facilities.

#### *Locational Criteria*

- Underdeveloped areas that are generally adjacent or distant to urban areas;
- Single-family, larger-lot residential development is primary land use;
- Areas with high scenic values, watersheds, and natural areas, and can also include areas with steep hillsides, limited vehicular access, limited to no public infrastructure or facilities, or natural hazard areas that would limit development;
- Areas where agricultural uses are permitted ; and,
- Areas where animal uses are permitted.

#### *Intensity of Use*

Densities vary based on site restrictions (environmental, hillside management, and sufficient services and infrastructure) and applicable zoning requirements.

**Rural Land 1 (RL1)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per acre (1 du/ac) density.

**Rural Land 1 (RL2)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per two (2) acre (1 du/2ac) density.

**Rural Land 1 (RL5)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per five (5) acre (1 du/5ac) density.

**Rural Land 1 (RL10)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per ten (10) acre (1 du/10ac) density.

**Rural Land 1 (RL20)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per twenty (20) acre (1 du/20ac) density.



Rural Land

**Rural Land Use - Zoning Matrix**

Rural Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
AG	Agriculture	A-1	Light Agriculture
		A-2	Heavy Agriculture
		A-2-H	Heavy Agriculture, Including Hog Ranches
RL1	Rural Lands 1	R-A	Residential Agriculture
		A-1	Light Agriculture
		A-2	Heavy Agriculture
RL2	Rural Lands 2	R-R	Resort-Recreation
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
		A-1	Light Agriculture
RL5	Rural Lands 5	A-2	Heavy Agriculture
		R-R	Resort-Recreation
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
RL10	Rural Lands 10	A-1	Light Agriculture
		A-2	Heavy Agriculture
		R-R	Resort-Recreation
RL20	Rural Lands 20	R-A	Residential Agriculture
		A-1	Light Agriculture
		A-2	Heavy Agriculture
RL40	Rural Lands 40	R-R	Resort-Recreation
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
		A-1	Light Agriculture
RL40	Rural Lands 40	A-2	Heavy Agriculture
		R-R	Resort-Recreation
		R-A	Residential Agriculture

**Rural Land 1 (RL40)**

Rural land uses include single family homes, equestrian uses, agricultural and related activities, and other rural activities at a one (1) dwelling unit per forty (40) acre (1 du/40ac) density.

## B. RESIDENTIAL (H)

The intent of lands designated as Housing is to provide for a range of housing types to meet the needs and income levels of the economically and socially diverse unincorporated County population. Density bonuses for qualifying housing projects with affordable housing components or within Transit Oriented Districts (TODs) may be allowed in all Housing categories. Second units may be allowed as an accessory to a single-family residence on all residential parcels, subject to specific limitations and standards specified in Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code.

The land use designations under Housing are Large Lot Residential, Suburban Residential, Suburban High Density Residential, Urban Medium Density Residential, Urban Residential, Mid-Rise Residential, and High-Rise Residential:

### Large Lot Residential (H2)

#### *Purpose*

The intent of lands designated as Large Lot Residential is to provide areas for large lot, detached, and single-family development. Large Lot Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include rural large lot development and new tract home subdivisions. The Large Lot Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for single-family development on individual lots and secondary units or accessory uses;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities.

#### *Locational Criteria*

- Areas that are at the fringe of the urbanized region or in rural areas;
- Adjacent to or part of agricultural areas or rural land areas;
- Buffered from incompatible industrial and commercial uses; and,
- Areas with limited public services, facilities, and access.

#### *Intensity of Use*

0-2 dwelling units per acre (0-2 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.



Suburban Residential

### Suburban Residential (H5)

#### *Purpose*

The intent of lands designated as Suburban Residential is to provide areas for detached, single-family development. Suburban Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include new tract home subdivisions, older, established suburbs, and built-out communities. The Suburban Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for single-family development on individual lots and secondary units or accessory uses;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities.

#### *Locational Criteria*

- Areas that are at the fringe of the urbanized region or in rural areas;
- Adjacent to or part of agricultural areas or rural land areas;
- Buffered from incompatible industrial and commercial uses;
- Limited public services and facilities; and
- May have limited access.

#### *Intensity of Use*

0-5 dwelling units per acre (0-5 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.



**Suburban High Density Residential (H9)*****Purpose***

The intent of lands designated as Suburban High Density Residential is to provide areas for detached single-family, attached single-family, duplexes, and townhome developments. Suburban High Density Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include new tract home subdivisions, established suburbs and neighborhoods, and newer, planned developments throughout the County. The Suburban High Density Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for small lot development, suburban development, and secondary units;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities and residential care facilities.

***Locational Criteria***

- Areas that are at the fringe of the urbanized region;
- Areas within an urbanized region but are predominantly single-family neighborhoods;
- Areas with existing public services and facilities; and,
- Areas with increased access to highways, freeways, arterials, and transit.

***Intensity of Use***

0-9 dwelling units per acre (0-9 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.



Medium Density Residential

**Urban Medium Density Residential (H18)*****Purpose***

The intent of lands designated as Urban Medium Density Residential is to provide areas for duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, and multi-family housing developments. Urban Medium Density Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include urban residential neighborhoods, older, established suburbs, built-out communities, and newer planned developments. The Urban Medium Density Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for urban residential development;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places;
- Provides lands for mobile home parks; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities, residential care facilities, associated living facilities, supportive housing, and group residential homes.
- May be appropriate for mixed use developments.

***Locational Criteria***

- Areas that are within a developed or urbanized region;
- Areas that are a mix of single-family residences and smaller multi-family neighborhoods;
- Areas located in closer proximity to community services;
- Areas with existing public services and facilities; and,
- Areas with increased access to highways, freeways, arterials, and transit.

***Intensity of Use***

9-18 dwelling units per acre (9-18 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.

**Urban Residential (H30)*****Purpose***

The intent of lands designated as Urban Residential is to provide areas for apartment, condominium, and mid-rise multi-family housing developments. Urban Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include urban residential neighborhoods, older established suburbs, and built-out communities. The Urban Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for urban residential development;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places;
- Provides lands for mobile home parks; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, supportive housing, and group residential homes.
- May be appropriate for mixed use developments.

#### **Locational Criteria**

- Areas that are within a developed or urbanized communities;
- Areas that are predominantly multi-family neighborhoods;
- Areas located in closer proximity to community services;
- Areas with existing public services and facilities; and,
- Areas with increased access to highways, freeways, arterials, and transit.

#### **Intensity of Use**

18-30 dwelling units per acre (18-30 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.

#### **Mid-Rise Residential (H50)**

##### **Purpose**

The intent of lands designated as Mid-Rise Residential is to provide areas for apartment, condominium, mid-rise multi-family housing, and large, multi-story, and multi-family developments. Mid-Rise Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include urban residential neighborhoods and Marina del Rey. The Mid-Rise Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for urban residential development;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places;
- Provides lands for mobile home parks; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, supportive housing, and group residential homes.
- May be appropriate for mixed use developments.

#### **Locational Criteria**

- Areas that are within urbanized communities;

- Areas that are predominantly multi-family neighborhoods;
- Areas located in closer proximity to community services;
- Areas with existing public services and facilities; and,
- Areas with increased access to highways, freeways, arterials, and transit.

#### **Intensity of Use**

30-50 dwelling units per acre (30-50 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.

#### **High-Rise Residential (H75)**

##### **Purpose**

The intent of lands designated as High-Rise Residential is to provide areas for apartment, condominium, high-rise multi-family housing, and large, multi-story, and multi-family developments. High-Rise Residential areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County include heavily urbanized residential neighborhoods and Marina del Rey. The High-Rise Residential designation:

- Provides lands suitable for urban residential development;
- Provides lands for civic institutions and religious gathering places; and,
- Provides lands for family day care facilities, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities, supportive housing, and group residential homes.



High Density Residential in Marina Del Rey  
Source: Pictometry International Corp

- May be appropriate for mixed use developments.

#### **Locational Criteria**

- Areas that are within urbanized communities;
- Areas that are predominantly multi-family-family neighborhoods;
- Areas located in closer proximity to community services;
- Areas with existing public services and facilities; and,
- Areas with increased access to highways, freeways, arterials, and transit.

#### **Intensity of Use**

50-75 dwelling units per acre (50-75 du/ac) and applicable zoning requirements.

#### **Residential Summary**

**Large Lot Residential (H2):** Single family detached homes, at densities of one (1) to two (2) dwelling unit per acre (1-2 du/ac).

**Suburban Residential (H5):** Single family detached homes, at densities of one (1) to five (5) dwelling unit per acre (1-5 du/ac).

**Suburban High Density Residential (H9):** Single family detached and attached homes, townhomes, and duplexes, at densities of one (1) to nine (9) dwelling unit per acre (1-9 du/ac).

**Urban Medium Density Residential (H18):** Townhomes, condominiums, duplexes, and multi-family residences, at densities of ten (10) to eighteen (18) dwelling unit per acre 10-18 du/ac).

**Urban Residential (H30):** Low-rise multi-family residences, at densities of eighteen (18) to thirty (30) dwelling unit per acre (19-30 du/ac).

**Mid-Rise Residential (H50):** Mid-rise to large, multi-story multi-family residences, at densities of thirty (30) to fifty (50) dwelling unit per acre (30-50 du/ac).

**High-Rise Residential (H75):** High-rise, multi-story multi-family residences, at densities of fifty (50) to seventy-five (75) dwelling unit per acre (50-75 du/ac).

#### **Residential Land Use - Zoning Matrix**

Residential Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
H2	Large Lot Residential	A-1	Light Agriculture*
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
		R-1	Single-Family Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H5	Suburban Residential	A-1	Light Agriculture*
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
		R-1	Single-Family Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H9	Suburban High Density Residential	A-1	Light Agriculture*
		R-A	Residential Agriculture
		R-1	Single-Family Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H18	Medium Density Residential	R-2	Two Family Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H30	Urban Residential	R-3	Limited Multiple Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H50	Urban Medium Residential	R-4	Unlimited Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development
H75	High-Rise Residential	R-4	Unlimited Residence
		RPD	Residential Planned Development

\* Some areas in Residential designations are developed with single family residences and are currently zoned A-1 (e.g. East Compton, Avocado Heights).

## C. COMMERCIAL

Commercial land use designations provide appropriately located areas for a variety of retail, offices, restaurants, businesses, and service establishments to serve rural areas, residential neighborhoods, and regional districts.

The land use designations under Commercial are Rural Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and Major Commercial:

### Rural Commercial (CR)

#### *Purpose*

Provides sites for commercial, retail, personal and professional services compatible with agricultural, rural, and recreational activities and that serve areas that are sparsely populated or rural in nature. Rural Commercial uses are limited in scope and intensity and exist to meet the needs of residents and travelers in rural areas. The Rural Commercial use:

- Can include restaurants, general stores, professional offices, and retail services; and,
- Is organized to protect resources, promote sustainability, and maintain compatibility between rural communities and extractive industry and agricultural industry.

#### *Locational Criteria*

- The majority of Rural Commercial sites are located in the northern parts of the County, the Antelope Valley, communities on the outskirts of the Santa Clarita Valley, and in the Santa Monica Mountains;
- Areas with low population concentrations;
- Areas where there are no major commercial districts or regional commercial centers; and,
- Areas that may include a small grouping of services for travelers on major highways.

#### *Intensity of Use*

70% lot coverage with a 35 ft. height limit and applicable zoning requirements.



Neighborhood Commercial

### Neighborhood Commercial (CN)

#### *Purpose*

To provide local serving commercial, office and professional businesses, retail, service establishments, and mixed use development that meet the needs of a residential area. Neighborhood Commercial is characterized by smaller to medium-sized parcels as compared to major commercial areas and includes:

- Neighborhood Commercial services, which includes retail sales, limited office space, restaurants, and personal services that serve the immediate residential neighborhood;
- Strip malls (or mini-malls), where an open area shopping center has stores that are arranged in a row, with a sidewalk in front of the stores, and usually a large parking lot in front that faces major traffic arterials. Strip malls are generally self-contained with limited pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods;
- Neighborhood and family businesses; and,
- Anchor or ground level stores for mixed use developments.

#### *Locational Criteria*

- Neighborhood commercial land uses exist across the entire County;
- Areas located adjacent to residential areas;



- Areas that include commercial services along major boulevards, “main streets”, or at major intersections, and also central business districts;
- Areas close to public transit routes and are pedestrian friendly and accessible;
- Can include grocery stores, small professional office complexes, and retail chains; and,
- Areas with full infrastructure facilities and services.

### **Intensity of Use**

75% lot coverage with a 35 ft. height limit and applicable zoning requirements.

### **Major Commercial (CM)**

#### **Purpose**

Provide areas for large, retail and destination shopping areas, tourist and recreation related commercial services, hotels, and amusement activities. Major commercial areas include:

- Shopping malls (or shopping centers) that have a regional reach in their services and contain a building or set of buildings with a variety of retail units and large parking lots; and,
- Big-box stores, which generally refers to large chain stores, often grouped together to form shopping centers, and are characterized by a major building that is supported by a large parking lot that is accessible to highways, freeways, and major arterials.



Major Commercial

### **Commercial Land Use - Zoning Matrix**

Commercial Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
CR	Rural Commercial	C-H	Commercial Highway
		C-1	Restricted Business
		CR	Commercial Recreation
		CPD	Commercial Planned Development
CN	Neighborhood Commercial	C-H	Commercial Highway
		C-1	Restricted Business
		C-2	Neighborhood Commercial
		C-3	Unlimited Commercial
		C-R	Commercial Recreation
		CPD	Commercial Planned Development
CM	Major Commercial	C-3	Unlimited Commercial
		C-M	Commercial Manufacturing
		C-R	Commercial Recreation
		CPD	Commercial Planned Development

### **Locational Criteria**

- Major commercial development is generally planned and located on large parcels due to the size and amount of land that is developed;
- Areas that are easily accessible to major freeways, highways, and major roadways; and,
- Areas with full infrastructure facilities and services.

### **Intensity of Use**

80% lot coverage, with 55 foot height limits and applicable zoning requirements.

## D. INDUSTRIAL

The Industrial land use designation provides appropriately located areas for a wide range of industry-related and job-related activities. Industrial land uses in the County include refineries and ports, manufacturing and assembly, and modern high-tech office uses.

Industrial land uses are important as major job sites and economic generators. Some industrial land uses also produce environmental hazards. As such, the appropriate and safe development of industrial land and the land surrounding industrial areas must be ensured through an environmental review of all development proposals.

The land use designations under Industrial are Rural Industrial, Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, and Office and Professional.

### Rural Industrial (IR)

#### *Purpose*

Provides sites for industrial uses that are compatible with agricultural and rural activities and that serve areas that are sparsely populated or rural in nature.

Rural industrial uses exist to meet the needs of residents in rural areas and are limited in scope and intensity due to such factors as lack of public services or infrastructure, incompatible adjacent land uses, or environmental impacts. Rural Industrial uses:

- Can include truck and farm equipment sales and repair, agricultural or mineral processing activities, small energy producing activities, and assembly/warehousing; and,
- Is organized to protect adjacent uses from any potential environmental impacts from industrial activities, such as excessive noise levels and dust.



Industrial Areas are Increasingly Threatened by Residential and Commercial Development

#### *Locational Criteria*

The majority of Rural Industrial sites are located in the northern parts of the County, the Antelope Valley, communities on the outskirts of the Santa Clarita Valley, and the Santa Monica Mountains.

- Areas with low population concentrations;
- Areas where there are no major residential districts or regional industrial parks; and,
- Areas with limited public services and facilities.

#### *Intensity of Use*

85% lot coverage, no height limit, and applicable zoning requirements.

### Light Industrial (IL)

#### *Purpose*

Identifies and establishes areas suitable for light industrial and industrial park activities, warehouses, distribution, assembly, and repair facilities. Light industrial areas provide opportunities to concentrate industrial uses to enable the efficient use of public services and infrastructure, energy, and transportation networks. Light Industrial uses:

- Generally have less environmental impacts than heavy industrial uses;
- Can include a variety of activities including assembly, disassembly, fabricating, finishing, manufacturing, packaging, and repairing or processing of materials,

printing, commercial laundry, photographic film processing, vehicle repair garages, building maintenance shops, metal work, millwork, and cabinetry work;

- Can include warehouses;
- Can include small commercial accessory uses that support the district; and,
- May be appropriate as anchors to mixed use developments.

#### ***Locational Criteria***

- Light Industrial uses can be found across the entire unincorporated County;
- Areas with existing public services and infrastructure;
- Areas that are adequately buffered from residential or major commercial districts, or are physically suited for industrial activities; and,
- Areas with transportation access that can meet industrial use demands and do not expose neighboring districts to excessive truck traffic or pollution.

#### ***Intensity of Use***

90% lot coverage, 35 ft. height limit, and applicable zoning requirements.



Light Industrial

#### **Heavy Industrial (IH)**

##### ***Purpose***

Identifies and establishes areas suitable for heavy industrial activities that are intense in nature and have the potential to generate major environmental concerns, such as noise, dust, and other nuisances. Heavy industrial areas are major employment and economic generators. Heavy Industrial uses:

- Generally have parcels that are generally large in nature, with buildings that have a large floor area and a high number of employees;
- Can include heavy manufacturing, refineries, and other labor and capital intensive industrial activities; and,
- Can include small commercial accessory uses that support the district.

##### ***Locational Criteria***

- Heavy Industrial uses require special attention to siting criteria due to the nature of heavy industrial activities and potential environmental impacts;
- Areas with existing public services and infrastructure;
- Areas that are adequately buffered from residential or major commercial districts, and are physically suited for heavy industrial activities;
- Areas with transportation access that can meet industrial use demands and do not expose neighboring districts to excessive truck traffic or pollution; and,
- Areas with rail access.



Heavy Industrial

**Intensity of Use**

90% lot coverage, no height limit, and applicable zoning requirements.

**Office and Professional (IO)****Purpose**

Provides areas suitable for major office and business uses, and other employee intensive uses, such as technology and research centers, corporate headquarters, and clean industry hubs. The Office and Professional land use:

- Can accommodate various types of office uses that perform administrative, professional, and personal services as well as research and development activities;
- Are sites for labor intensive, employment centers with generally high-skilled jobs;
- Can include small commercial accessory uses that support the district; and,
- May be appropriate in mixed use developments.

**Locational Criteria**

- Areas generally adjacent to major transportation routes (freeways) or public transit routes;
- Can be transitional areas from residential or commercial uses to industrial uses; and,
- Areas with existing public services and infrastructure.



Office and Professional - Source: Pictometry International Corp

**Industrial Land Use - Zoning Matrix**

Industrial Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
IR	Rural Industrial	M-1	Light Manufacturing
		D-2	Desert-Mountain
		MPD	Manufacturing Planned Development
IL	Light Industrial	M-1	Light Manufacturing
		MPD	Manufacturing Planned Development
IH	Heavy Industrial	M-2	Heavy Manufacturing
		M-2.5	Aircraft Heavy Manufacturing
		M-4	Unlimited Manufacturing
		MPD	Manufacturing Planned Development
IO	Office and Professional	M-1	Light Manufacturing
		SR-D	Scientific Research and Development
		MPD	Manufacturing Planned Development

**Intensity of Use**

90% lot coverage, no height limit, and applicable zoning requirements.



## E. PUBLIC AND SEMI-PUBLIC FACILITIES

The Public and Semi-Public land use designation provides for appropriately located areas for activities by public and/or quasi-public entities. The types of uses under Public and Semi-Public Facilities includes airports and other major transportation facilities; solid and liquid waste disposal sites, multiple use stormwater treatment facilities, and utilities; public buildings, public educational institutions, hospitals, detention facilities, government buildings, and fairgrounds; and military land and/or military bases.

The land use designations under Public and Semi-Public Facilities are:

### Public and Semi-Public Facilities (P)

Provides areas for the appropriate development and presence of a variety of public and semi-public facilities, infrastructure and their related operations.

### Transportation Corridor (TC)

Provides for areas that contain major transportation infrastructure and facilities, and represents freeways, highways and major roads, rail and busways, and their dedicated rights-of-way, and allows for the development of high intensity public and private use transportation facilities such as freeways, railways, and transit-oriented development over or near rail lines.

## Public & Semi-Public Land Use - Zoning Matrix

Public Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
<b>P</b>	Public & Semi-Public Facilities	<b>IT</b>	Institutional
<b>TC</b>	Transportation Corridor	<b>N/A</b>	N/A
<b>ML</b>	Military Land	<b>O-S</b>	Open Space

### Military Land (ML)

Military bases and land controlled by U.S. Department of Defense.



Transmission Lines Criss-Cross the entire County

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## F. OPEN SPACE

The Open Space land use designation provides for areas that are preserved for environmental conservation, historical and cultural resources, and for recreational areas. Open space areas include both public and privately owned lands, have limited development activities, encourage the preservation and conservation of SEA's and other sensitive natural habitats, protects water bodies and watersheds, and reduces encroachment of these areas from development.

The land use designations under Open Space are:

### Open Space Conservation (OS-C)

Provides for the preservation of open space areas and scenic resource preservation in perpetuity. Can include passive trail networks. Applied only to land that is legally constrained from future development activities.

### Open Space Parks and Recreation (OS-PR)

Includes open space areas for recreational uses, such as regional and local parks, trails, athletic fields, community gardens, golf courses, and cemeteries.

### Open Space National Forest (OS-NF)

Applies to the Angeles National Forest and Los Padres National Forest areas under the supervision of the National Forest Service.



There are Many Types of Open Space in the County - Source: Parks and Recreation

## Open Space Land Use - Zoning Matrix

Open Space Land Use Designations		Consistent Zoning Designations	
OS-C	Open Space - Conservation	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed
OS-PR	Open Space - Parks & Rec.	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed
		C-R	Commercial Recreation
OS-NF	Open Space - National Forest	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed
OS-BLM	Open Space - Bureau of Land Management	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed
OS-W	Open Space - Water	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed
OS-MR	Open Space - Mineral Resources	0-S	Open Space
		W	Watershed

### Bureau of Land Management (OS-BLM)

Applies to all land under the specific regulations of the Federal Bureau of Land Management.

### Water (OS-W)

Includes bodies of water such as lakes, reservoirs, natural waterways, and man-made infrastructure such as drainage channels, floodways, and spillways. Can also include active trail networks within or along drainage channels. The purpose of OS-W is to prevent the encroachment of land uses or structures that would endanger the floodway channel or degrade the ability to prevent the loss of life or property.

### Mineral Resources (OS-MR)

Includes mineral extraction and processing sites, and areas that are protected for mineral extraction activities. Upon depletion of mineral resources, and after the appropriate reclamation and remediation of the site, recreational uses may occur.

## H. OVERLAYS

There are four supplemental land use overlay categories that where applied, guide land use decisions and further define County land use planning policies.

### Mixed Use Overlay

The Mixed Use overlay is used to identify areas that are encouraged for mixed use development activities based on criteria including, proximity to transit services, population density, commercial activity, and community character. Decisions regarding the type and intensity of mixed use development shall be governed by both the land use designation and the zoning ordinance, and any applicable incentives or development bonuses as implemented by local ordinances and plans. Mixed use overlays will be tailored to the specific character of their respective neighborhood.

### Transit-Oriented District (TOD) Overlay

The TOD Overlay represents areas that have been designated Transit-Oriented Districts based on their proximity to major public transit services. Decisions regarding the type and intensity of TOD development shall be governed by both the land use designation and the individual zoning ordinances that have been created for each TOD District, as well as any applicable incentives or development bonuses as implemented by local ordinances and plans.

### Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) Overlay

The Significant Ecological Area Overlay identifies lands containing important biological resources in an effort to conserve the County's diverse ecological heritage. SEAs are important or fragile land and water areas that are valuable as plant or animal communities, important to the preservation of threatened or endangered species, and needed for the conservation of biological diversity in the County. A full description of the SEA Program is contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element, and additional information on the regulatory provisions of SEAs is included in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan. Decisions regarding the type and intensity of uses permitted within SEAs shall be governed by both the land use designation, and a determination of compatibility between the proposed use and specific biotic resources located on the property.

### Hillside Management Overlay

The Hillside Management Overlay provides direction for development proposals that are located within parcels with slopes greater than 25 percent or higher. The intent of the

overlay and its accompanying ordinance is to protect the public from natural hazards associated with very steep hillsides and to mitigate the effects of development and grading on the County's scenic resources through hillside preservation. Hillside Management is discussed in the Scenic Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element, and the regulatory provisions of hillside management can be found in the County's Zoning Code. Decisions regarding the type and intensity of uses permitted in Hillside Management areas shall be governed by both the land use designation and the Hillside Management Area Ordinance.



Overlay in the Tehachapi Mountains Area

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## I. SPECIFIC PLANS

A Specific Plan is a tool used for planning large scale projects, typically intended to be developed over a lengthy period of time or in specific phases. Applications for a Specific Plan are to be processed pursuant to Government Code Section 65450. A Specific Plan provides assurances that over time the rules and regulations for development will not be changed for the site. In exchange for this certainty, Specific Plan agreements frequently mandate a greater level of community amenities, superior design, and an innovative site layout as a means to create a more desirable living environment than could otherwise be achieved through the conventional subdivision process. The Specific Plan enables the County and developer to assemble, in one package, a set of land use policies, standards, regulations, and implementation programs tailored to the unique characteristics of a particular site. The intensity and type of land uses permitted in an area designated as a Specific Plan are determined by the specific land use designations and standards of the Specific Plan.



Canyon Park Specific Plan

### Land Use Policy Considerations

There are several land use policy considerations that must be taken into account when making planning and development decisions in the County. The following discussion summarizes these considerations:

#### Land Use Versus Zoning

Although they are intrinsically related, there are several important distinctions between the role of land use policies and that of zoning and subdivision regulations. The General Plan sets forth basic land use policy, whereas zoning and subdivision regulations are tools to implement General Plan policies. In addition, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) affects land use planning by evaluating the impacts of development on the environment.

As the General Plan is designed to provide general land use policy for the County, the Land Use Element does not discuss the County's zoning and subdivision codes in detail. Where appropriate, specific code citations are included to help clarify General Plan goals and policies. The entire Los Angeles County Municipal Code can be accessed from the Department of Regional Planning's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

The differences between land use policy, zoning, subdivision regulations, and CEQA are as follows:



Newhall Ranch Specific Plan - Source: Newhall Land and Farm



- **Land Use Policy:** Land use policy establishes the basic type and intensity of uses permitted by the General Plan for each land use category, including the overall maximum density for residential development and maximum intensity of development for commercial and industrial uses.
- **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations:** Zoning and subdivision regulations set the specific standards that govern the division and use of individual parcels of land, including such factors as the minimum size of parcels, lot configuration, access, height restrictions, and front-, side- and rear-yard setback standards for structures. For new development projects, the zoning designation must be consistent or brought into consistency with the land use category. The County's Zoning and Subdivision Codes are General Plan implementation tools that provide much greater detail on allowable uses and establish the review procedures by which local government decision makers decide on land use proposals.
- **CEQA:** The California Environmental Quality Act is implemented by the County during the land use planning or permitting process. The basic purposes of CEQA are to 1) Inform governmental decision-makers and the public about the potential significant environmental effects of proposed development activities; 2) Identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced; 3) Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures, and 4) Disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved a project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved.

#### Allowable Land Uses

Land use designations and zoning standards are not the sole determinants of the type of uses appropriate for or which may be approved on a given parcel of land. The applications of density bonuses, or the requirements of other regulatory agencies with jurisdiction over the property, may significantly affect the allowable use and intensity of development. To determine what may be allowed on any given parcel requires a review of several factors and consultation with a County planning official is highly recommended, and for some projects, required.

#### Land Use and Zoning Consistency

The General Plan establishes the proposed long-range general use of land. In contrast, the Zoning Code and Zoning Map indicate the specific type of land use that the property is currently suited for based on existing conditions. The Zoning Map is subject to continuous amendments so that land, over time, will gradually and systematically be rezoned to be consistent with the planning policies and long-range objectives of the General Plan. Furthermore, any inconsistencies arising from the updated General Plan will not be subject to the provisions of non-conforming uses until such time as future land use planning updates, zoning updates, or community-based planning efforts amend County land use maps.



Stevenson's Ranch is a product of the County's Subdivision Code

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Upon adoption of the General Plan, or as community-based plans are implemented or updated, any parcels that have been subject to a change in land use or zoning that has resulted in a non-conforming use will not be subject to penalty for a grace period lasting until:

1. A project is brought forward that triggers recognition of the non-conforming use. For these cases, projects will be brought before the Regional Planning Commission for public hearings where land use determinations will be heard and decided.
2. A zoning consistency program is completed after adoption of the General Plan or a community-based plan. Each zoning consistency program will involve extensive community outreach, public participation in land use and zoning planning designations, and public notification.
3. Additionally, projects that have been filed with the County AND approved no later than six (6) months later of will not be subject to any land use or zoning changes related to the General Plan update or the creation or update of a community-based plan.

## IV. LAND USE POLICY MAPS

The unincorporated communities with localized planning documents such as Area Plans, Community Plans, and Local Plans have their own land use designations and corresponding land use policy maps. These maps and their varied land uses are contained in Appendix I, Los Angeles County Land Use Policy Maps, and can be accessed through the Department's public website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/luz.htm>.

Figure 3.2 is a generalized land use policy map for the entire unincorporated County. All community-based land use plans and the General Plan land use categories have been consolidated to show the broad land use distributions in the unincorporated County.

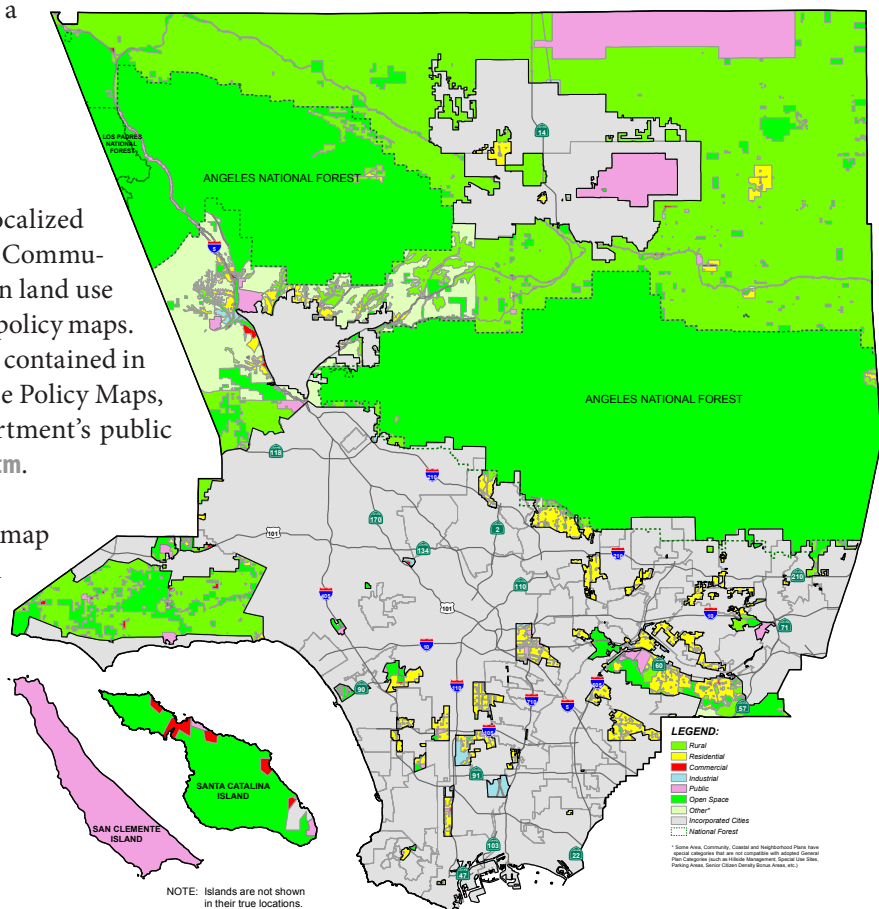


Figure 3.2: Generalized Land Use Policy Map for Unincorporated L.A. County

## Land Use Maps for Unincorporated Areas without a Local Plan

Appendix II also contains 37 land use policy maps that represent the unincorporated communities in the County without a community-based plan. The County is committed to providing community-based plans for all of the unincorporated areas of the County. The Community-Based Planning Program, described in detail at the end of the Land Use Element, summarizes the program to implement this commitment. The 37 land use policy maps in Appendix II will be the adopted land use maps for these communities, and will serve as the foundation for the community-based planning process that will be initiated in these areas.

For further information on County land use maps and other detailed maps from the General Plan, the Department of Regional Planning provides interactive land use maps and mapping features for use by the public through its website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/intGisMaps.htm>.



Smart Growth - Mixed Use Areas  
Source: City of Santa Clarita

## V. STRATEGIC LAND USE POLICY

The General Plan promotes a flexible and innovative agenda for land use planning in the unincorporated County areas. The County is committed to maintaining a high quality of life for the residents and businesses in the County, and is dedicated to working with communities to create vibrant, livable neighborhoods.

The Department of Regional Planning utilizes the most current and innovative planning practices in order to create quality communities throughout the unincorporated County. The County recognizes the importance of innovative planning strategies in addressing land use issues and community needs, and provides the foundation for their further implementation through community plans, specific plans, zoning ordinances, and implementation programs.

In addition to promoting a progressive set of land use strategies, the Land Use Element provides direction for more specific land use planning and decision-making activities within unincorporated areas of the County. While recognizing the role of adopted area and community plans in regulating local land use and transportation patterns, the General Plan Land Use Element provides guidance for the resolution of specific issues when one of the following conditions exist:

- The specific issues involved, individually or collectively, constitute a regional land use concern; and,
- No adopted local plan covers the area in question or addresses the issue at hand.

### County Land Use Three Point Plan

The following section outlines the land use strategies and policy tools the County utilizes to meet its land use goals and objectives. The County's land use strategies are divided into three overarching themes:

1. Smart Growth;
2. Environmental Management; and,
3. Healthy & Livable Communities.

#### 1. SMART GROWTH

Smart growth in unincorporated Los Angeles County refers to the practice of promoting compact, sustainable, self-sufficient, walkable, and orderly land use development. With a planned, managed and smart approach to growth, the County believes it can effectively address environmental and social concerns, while simultaneously planning for more efficient and effective development practices.

Smart growth in unincorporated Los Angeles County calls for using different strategies that will represent the best outcomes for each individual community. For example, smart growth in the County's southern basin involves increasing residential and commercial densities along designated



Smart Growth - Residential Infill Development



transit corridors, encouraging infill activity and economic investment, and protecting existing community character. For the unincorporated areas in the North County, smart growth involves preserving the rural nature of the region's small communities, protecting agricultural areas from non-agricultural land uses, fostering a balance between jobs and housing, and ensuring commercial services meet the needs of a growing population. One primary objective of practicing smart growth over the whole geographic area of the County is the protection and preservation of the County's natural resources, while ensuring that growth and development in the County meets the social and economic needs of its residents and businesses.

### County Smart Growth Principles

The following principles demonstrate the general intent of the County's strategy for smart growth. These principles are incorporated into the goals and policies of each element of the General Plan.

- Promote traditional neighborhood development patterns that utilize smart growth practices, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), and Low-Impact Development (LID) principles in the expansion and development of new urban areas of the County;
- Prioritize development of vacant and under-utilized parcels within the County's existing urban areas;
- Concentrate development along existing public transit corridors;
- Increase density along public transit corridors and within a quarter mile radius of transit hubs;
- Protect the character of the County's rural areas and communities by discouraging sprawl-like and leap-frog type development;
- Promote neighborhood and community development that incorporates compact streets, a mix of uses, and multimodal infrastructure;

- Preserve open spaces in a manner that contains development within existing developed areas, protects the integrity of rural community boundaries, and maintains the environmental functions of the County's sensitive ecosystems; and,
- Improve the jobs-to-housing balance of unincorporated communities..

**Figure 3.3** is a graphic representation of how the County plans to implement its Smart Growth strategies, called the Environmental Constraints and Development Suitability Map. The County of Los Angeles recognizes the urgent need to reconcile the conflicting demands between the conservation of its diverse natural resources, the need to protect residents and businesses from hazards, and the expansion of urban and suburban development. Careful planning and stewardship by County officials is needed to maintain the physical and natural amenities that make Los Angeles County a desirable place to live.

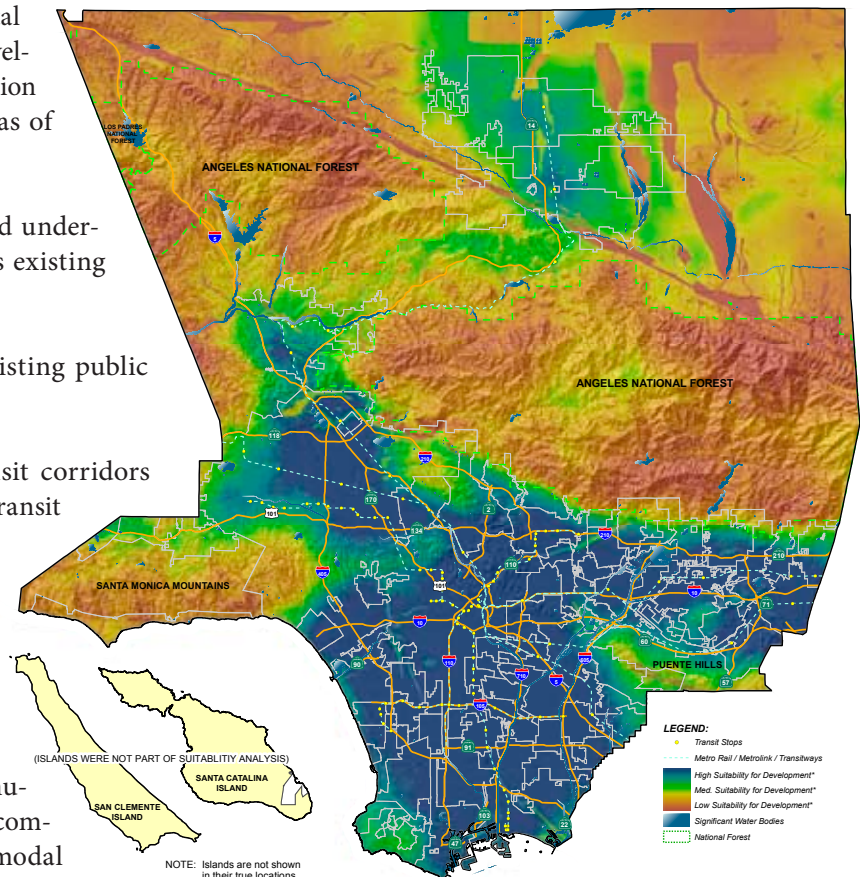


Figure 3.3: L.A. County Environmental Constraints & Development Suitability



Long-range planning allows the County to responsibly manage future development, which is necessitated by continued population and economic growth. As such, the Los Angeles County Environmental Constraints and Development Suitability Map was created to identify those areas in the County where future development is most suitable. The development suitability index utilizes a combination of environmental constraints, such as proximity to natural resource and natural hazard areas, as well as development criteria including proximity to public transit, public services, and infrastructure, to help planners, County officials, and residents make informed and efficient land use decisions. In short, the Suitability Map highlights the areas in the County most appropriate for new population, residential, and economic growth while simultaneously preserving the County's open spaces and natural resources.

The County's land suitability model utilizes an integrated Geographic Information System (GIS) approach to take a quantitative, comprehensive, and multi-criteria approach in evaluating the suitability for future land use development in the County. The criteria used to measure an area's level of suitability for development was based on the following factors (the full methodology and measuring analysis can be found online at the General Plan Section of the Department of regional Planning's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/spGPMMain.htm>):

- Proximity to California's Fault Trace zones;
- Proximity to 100-year (FEMA Q3) flood zones;
- Proximity to lakes, reservoirs and major rivers;
- Proximity to non-channelized streams or river beds;
- Proximity to California Natural Diversity Database identified species;
- Location within Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs);
- Proximity to wildlife corridors;
- Location within seismic zones;
- Location within Hillside Management Areas;
- Location within Agricultural Opportunity Areas;
- Proximity to freeways;
- Proximity to highways or major arterials; and,
- Proximity to public transit.

“ In his landmark book, *Design with Nature*, Ian McHarg proposed the simple notion of asking the land itself where are the best sites for development. He popularized the technique of preparing overlay maps of various environmental characteristics with their assorted developmental constraints and combining them to create a composite map of their cumulative effects that revealed varying degrees of environmental importance, and conversely, development suitability.

### Smart Growth Strategies

The following strategies and policy actions are used to implement the County's goal of achieving Smart Growth land use planning:

- A.** Infill development;
- B.** Appropriate densification;
- C.** Mixed use development;
- D.** Transit oriented development;
- E.** Housing development;
- F.** Jobs-to-housing balance;
- G.** Brownfield redevelopment; and,
- H.** Technology.

### A. Infill Development

Infill development focuses development on sites within already established communities and districts and away from undeveloped and open space areas. Infill development serves many purposes, but primarily, it targets growth in areas with existing infrastructure and provides alternatives to the suburban sprawl-like growth patterns that often creates disproportionate environmental, social, and public health impacts. The County strongly encourages development and economic investment in communities with readily available infill opportunities.

### B. Appropriate Densification

Densification policies in unincorporated County areas aim to focus development to under-utilized urban residential, commercial, or industrial parcels. Most commonly, the intensification of density applies to projects that are allowed to develop at densities that equal or possibly exceed those of adjacent parcels.



Mixed Use Development

Specifically related to residential parcels, the General Plan encourages the intensification of density for under-utilized parcels in areas that have an urban residential land use classification and are not covered by an area or community plan, subject to conformance with the following criteria as determined through ordinance and discretionary review:

- The proposed project enhances the surrounding area and assists in meeting community and County housing goals;
- The proposed project site is of sufficient size to accommodate design features and zoning requirements (e.g. setbacks, landscaping, buffering, post-construction Best Management Practices (BMPs)) necessary to ensure proper integration in the surrounding area;
- The proposed project minimizes the impacts of traffic, parking, and runoff;
- The proposed project conveys a high level of design that complements the surrounding neighborhood in terms of scale, design, and siting;
- The proposed project provides appropriate transitions from areas of differing intensity; and,
- The proposed project density is directly correlated to its proximity to available or planned public transportation.

### C. Mixed Use Development

Mixed use development is a traditional form of development that encourages the clustering of residential and commercial services at a neighborhood or district level. The County believes that mixed use development can provide many positive land use benefits, such as reducing the need to drive for errands and shopping, expanding the variety of housing types, creating a sense of identity and neighborhood character, promoting infill development, and fostering economic revitalization.

The County encourages the use of mixed use development around major transportation hubs such as the County's transit oriented districts, along commercial corridors, and other unique areas as established by community plans and zoning ordinances through the following procedures:

- **County Mixed Use Ordinance:** The County allows mixed use development in five Commercial zones with appropriate development limitations and standards and a streamlined permitting procedure.
- **Overlays:** The mixed use land use overlay identifies districts and corridors in unincorporated County communities where mixed use development is presently occurring or where it could occur in the future, based on conditions such as population density, infrastructure, proximity to transit, and community character. Implementation action programs will provide bonuses

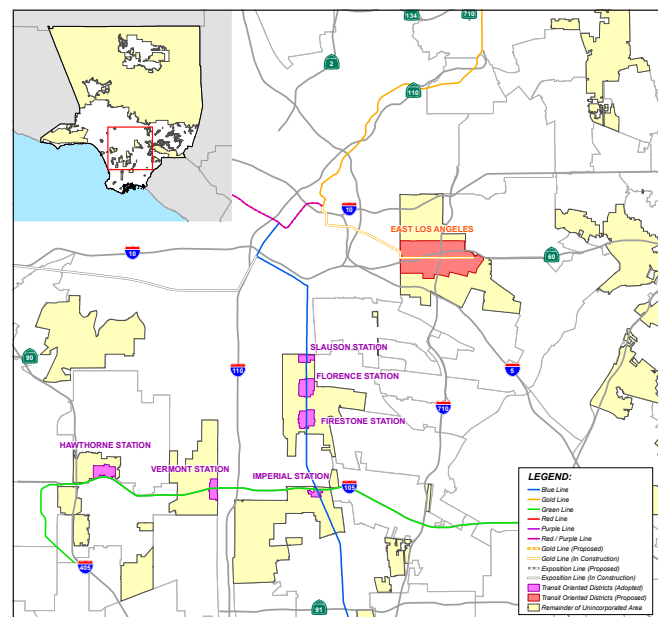


Figure 3.4: TOD Districts in Unincorporated County Areas



The City of LA's TOD at Hollywood and Western

and streamlined procedures to incentivize mixed use development in these overlay zones, including community specific programs that tailor the design, density, and intensity of mixed use developments to fit within the existing character of that community.

#### D. Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

TOD refers to the design and creation of compact, walkable communities built around mass transit stations. This type of development generally consists of high-density, mixed use buildings concentrated within a one-quarter to one-half mile radius around a transit stop. Traditionally, these transit stops are built around commuter, light rail, or subway train based mass transit, but can also include bus stations and depots. The intended purpose of TODs is to increase transit ridership, decrease automobile dependency, develop a pedestrian-friendly environment, cluster services and development, and to create vibrant, livable communities.

The County strongly encourages TOD development along its major public transportation corridors. The County Transit Oriented Districts Ordinance specifically designates the location and development criteria for six separate TOD districts. These districts, all within the unincorporated areas of the County, are located along the Blue and Green light rail lines operated by Metro (see **Figure 3.4**). Along the Blue Line, districts have been established at the Slauson, Florence, Firestone, and Imperial stations. Along the Green Line, districts have been established at the Vermont and

Hawthorne stations. Each TOD zoning district has been crafted for its specific neighborhood context, including parking reductions, height, bulk, and use restrictions that help to give each TOD a unique identity.

Future TOD districts are anticipated for the extension of the Gold Line light rail in East Los Angeles. The County will also research the potential of further expanding TOD districts to include communities along Metrolink rail lines and major bus routes. Further information on the County's Transit Oriented Districts can be found on the Department of Regional Planning's website, located at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

#### E. Housing Development

Los Angeles County continues to have a housing shortage, which adds significant burdens to the middle class, the workforce, senior citizens, and those living in poverty. The Housing Element, mandated by State law, must adequately plan to meet the existing and projected share of the region's housing needs. The Housing Element is also an opportunity to reassess the County's housing-related goals and objectives with respect to a wide range of housing-related program initiatives. Such initiatives include programs to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers to housing, funding and facilitating the development of affordable housing, addressing the housing needs of special needs populations, ensuring fair housing, preserving the County's affordable housing stock, and providing rental assistance and supportive housing opportunities to the homeless.

The Housing Element addresses the housing needs of residents of all income levels and evaluates the availability of a diversity of housing types, including those with special housing needs. Per the Housing Element, special needs populations include the elderly, agricultural workers, single-parent households, persons with disabilities, large households, and the homeless.

The Housing Element, which is adopted separately from the General Plan, includes a detailed discussion on affordable housing and special needs housing, and describes a variety



of mechanisms that may be employed to encourage the provision of critically needed housing units. The Housing Element consists of the following components: an analysis of existing and projected needs; an inventory of vacant and underutilized sites; an analysis on housing constraints; and a description of County housing programs and policies. Further information on the Housing Element can be found on the Department of Regional Planning web site at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

### **Residential Development**

The General Plan residential land use classifications on land use policy maps are intended to describe dominant housing characteristics and permitted density ranges. Within areas with adopted area and community plans, those land use policy maps serve to refine these generalized classifications and establish more specific density standards and conditions for development. Where no such local plan exists, the allowable units established by the General Plan will guide decision-making relative to specific residential development proposals.

The exception to this is for affordable housing and senior citizen housing. The General Plan policy strongly supports the provision of critically needed housing of varying levels of affordability for, but not limited to, extremely low income (30% Area Median Income (AMI)), very low (50% AMI), lower (80% AMI), moderate income households (120% AMI), and senior citizen housing. In support of this policy emphasis, the General Plan proposes the application of density bonuses and incentives, the expediting of permits, and other programs designed to stimulate the production, as well as the preservation, of affordable housing and senior citizen housing by both public and private sectors.

### **F. Jobs-to-Housing Balance**

An important component of sustainable communities and sustainable land use is having a jobs-to-housing balance. The jobs-to-housing balance is a measure that is reached by working toward increasing opportunities for people to work and live in close proximity as to reduce long commutes that are costly both economically and environmentally.



Affordable Housing is Primarily a Supply and Demand Issue

The jobs-to-housing balance is a quantifiable measure, which is simply the number of jobs in a community divided by the number of housing units in that community. So, a community with far fewer jobs than residences would have a low jobs-to-housing ratio. Communities with a high jobs-to-housing ratio are usually considered major employment centers for a region. If the ratio is high or low, there is a jobs-to-housing imbalance. For example, in downtown Los Angeles there is an imbalance because more people commute into the area than live, and conversely in Santa Clarita, there is an imbalance because more people commute out of the area to find work.

Although there is no absolute measure for what constitutes a perfect jobs-to-housing balance, the General Plan supports policies and actions that increase the ratio of jobs to residences in unincorporated communities.

### **G. Brownfield Redevelopment**

Brownfields are former industrial or commercial sites that are abandoned or under-utilized due to real or perceived environmental contamination from previous or current uses. These sites primarily exist in urban areas, and as such have significant redevelopment potential. The County strongly encourages the remediation and redevelopment of all brownfield sites in its jurisdiction, as brownfield redevelopment presents the County with valuable opportunities to redevelop sites for new industries and employment sectors, to increase housing and commercial infill development, and



to promote joint public-private development efforts while simultaneously eliminating environmentally damaged sites in unincorporated County communities.

The costs and liability associated with the remediation of brownfield sites acts as a deterrent to redevelopment. Existing legislation limits the liability of existing or future owners of brownfield sites, and places the burden of the remediation costs on the past polluters of the site. There are several programs to fund clean-up efforts of brownfield sites in Los Angeles County:

- **The U.S. Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997:** Created a tax incentive for the redevelopment of Brownfield sites.
- **Community Facilities District (CFD):** California State Law permits CFDs to levy special taxes and issue bonds to provide funds for site cleanups.
- **California Local Cleanup Agreements Program:** Formally recognizes local agency cleanup programs and allows local health agencies to enter into written agreements to supervise cleanups, set cleanup goals, and provide certification of cleanup completion.
- **Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA):** CERCLA developed a National Priorities List (NPL) of hazardous and toxic waste sites throughout the U.S. to guide remediation



Brownfield Slated for Redevelopment, Whiteside



A Jobs to Housing Imbalance Generates Congestion

and clean-up efforts of brownfield sites. In 1986, the Federal Government refined CERCLA with the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) which increased CERCLA's funding, public participation, and enforcement powers.

Data on the number of brownfield sites in unincorporated Los Angeles County is provided by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor public web site, which provides access to detailed information on hazardous waste permitted and corrective action facilities, as well as existing site cleanup information. The County strongly encourages the cleanup and redevelopment of all of the brownfield sites in its jurisdictional areas.

#### H. Technology

The Department of Regional Planning is positioning itself to be a leader in utilizing the latest technology to facilitate its planning endeavors. The Department continually relies on data and technology to provide support for its land use policies and development decisions. The following programs represent the Department's commitment to technology and smart growth planning:

##### *Geographic Information Systems (GIS)*

The Department of Regional Planning has used GIS technology for nearly 20 years. Today, GIS technology is becoming the foundation for all data management activities in the Department. All of the maps and GIS web mapping

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applications created for the General Plan Update program were developed using GIS. These maps are the foundation for providing policy information to all Departmental staff, other departments, the general public, and the decision-making bodies of the County.

GIS-NET was the first application from the Department of Regional Planning that provided planning and zoning information to the public via the web. GP-NET was created to show proposed General Plan land use layers in a format that was interactive and easy to use for constituents. In addition, scanned tract and parcel maps, historical maps, zone change ordinance maps, and information about cases are available to staff through the GIS web mapping applications.

### ***Los Angeles Region – Imagery Acquisition Consortium (LARIAC)***

Aerial imagery provides numerous benefits to local and regional governments, such as floodplain mapping, transportation highway mapping and planning, environment and natural resource management, economic development and recruitment, education and research, search and



Ortho aerial imagery with parcels, zoning, and elevation contours



GIS-NET provides interactive mapping capabilities

rescue, multi-hazard threat applications, and various other emergency readiness, response, and recovery operations. Recognizing the growing value of geographic aerial imagery, the Department of Regional Planning, the Chief Information Office, and County Counsel formulated a program to acquire a set of imagery for a group of organizations willing to share the cost of acquisition. The LARIAC Program was established to acquire high resolution digital aerial imagery and digital terrain datasets (4" color orthogonal, 4" color infrared, 6" color oblique, digital terrain datasets derived from LiDAR, and 2' elevation contours) for the entire county. The project has successfully gained the participation of 10 County Departments, 31 municipalities and other public agencies. The LARIAC Program represents a model in regional cooperation that improves the quality, access, and cost-effectiveness of high resolution digital aerial imagery and digital terrain datasets. The data acquired has enabled all participating jurisdictions the ability to leverage this key geographic information asset for numerous decision support business applications, which has assisted in the effective and efficient delivery of services.

## **2. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT**

Environmental Management strategies are a strong component of the County's sustainable planning practices. As the County continues to grow, it is important that planning



address the need to provide areas for housing development and economic activities while simultaneously preserving the important natural amenities in the region. The following land use policies, regulations, and programs are utilized by County officials to achieve sustainable Environmental Management practices:

- Special environmental management areas regulation;
- Hazard and safety area regulation;
- Transfer of development rights (TDR) program;
- Land banking program; and,
- Mitigation banking.

#### A. Special Environmental Management Areas

Special Environmental Management Areas require regulated management practices due to the presence of natural resources, scenic resources, or identified hazards. Adherence to special criteria for development in these areas is necessary to prevent loss of life, property, and to protect the natural environment. The County strongly encourages that minimal development occur in Special Environmental Management Areas.

Discretionary development in Special Environmental Management Areas will be evaluated based on the following factors:



Open Space

- **Compatibility:** It shall be demonstrated that the subject property is capable of supporting the proposed development without increasing exposure to significant natural hazards or degrading identified critical natural resources. It shall further be established that access to the site is adequate to serve the intended use and that the provision of necessary services and facilities will not result in undue public costs.
- **Alternative Uses:** In the event that development other than that provided for in the land use designation or the underlying zoning classification is proposed, the appropriateness of the proposed project will be subject to discretionary review and finding.
- **Conditions, Design and Site Plan Review:** The appropriateness of a specific development proposal, in terms of suitability, scale, design, and character will be assured through the review and approval of a specific site plan, with conditions established as necessary through normal zoning or land divisions procedures. This review process will look at factors that include:
  - Whether a project conforms to General Plan policy;
  - Whether a project minimizes impacts on the environment, traffic, parking, runoff, and other factors as needed;
  - Whether the project conveys a high-level of design that complements adjacent uses in terms of scale, design, and siting; and,
  - Whether the project site can meet zoning requirements, such as setbacks, buffering, access, and others.

The Special Environmental Management Areas in the County are:

#### 1. Open Space Areas

The County encourages the preservation of its designated open space areas in perpetuity. Open space policy is thoroughly discussed in the Open Space, Parks and Recreation section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

#### 2. Significant Ecological Areas

General Plan policy promotes the conservation of Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) in as viable and natural a condition as possible, without prohibiting development,



Hillside Management

while ensuring biotic connectivity. General Plan policies related to SEAs are influenced by major factors, including federal and state law, public input and most importantly, a continued loss of biotic resources within the County. Further information on SEAs can be found in the Biological Resources section in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### 3. Hillside Management

It is the intent of General Plan policy to protect resources in hillside management areas from incompatible development. Hillside Management Areas are mountainous or foothill terrain with a natural slope of 25 percent or greater. Further information on Hillside Management can be found in the Scenic Resources section in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### 4. Agricultural Opportunity Areas

Agricultural Opportunity Areas (AOAs) include large contiguous land areas that are currently devoted to agricultural production, have been historically used for agricultural uses, or that are highly suitable for agricultural use due to the presence of favorable growing conditions such as climate, soils, and irrigation. The intent of General Plan policy is to protect such resource areas from the intrusion of incompatible uses that conflict with or preclude viable agricultural activity. Agricultural resources are more specifically addressed in the Agricultural Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### 5. National Forests

The Los Padres and Angeles National Forests encompass nearly 650,000 acres of land within Los Angeles County. The U.S. Forest Service prepares and periodically updates a *Land and Resources Management Plan* as a policy guide to the use of lands under their jurisdiction. Within the boundaries of the National Forests, nearly 40,000 acres are privately owned. For these parcels, commonly referred to as “in-holdings”, the County retains responsibility for land use regulation. It is the intent of the General Plan that these privately-owned parcels should be regulated in a manner consistent with the overall mission and Management Plans of the National Forests, as established by Congress. National Forests are more specifically addressed in the Biological Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### 6. Coastal Zone

In accordance with the California Coastal Act, Los Angeles County prepared two local coastal programs (LCPs) and is preparing a third for the unincorporated areas that lie within the state-designated coastal zone. These areas are Santa Catalina Island, Marina del Rey, and the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone. Santa Catalina Island and Marina del Rey have LCPs certified by the California Coastal Commission; therefore, these LCPs are part of the General Plan. The LCPs establish detailed land use policy and development standards within their respective coastal zone segments. Prior to certification of a local coastal



Agricultural Opportunity Area, Leona Valley





Mineral Resource Area, Baldwin Hills

program, specific development proposals are reviewed by the County for consistency with the General Plan or relevant area plan, but the authority to approve projects and issue development permits lies with the California Coastal Commission.

### **7. Mineral Resource Areas**

Mineral resources are commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits, such as sand, gravel, and other construction aggregate, as well as crude oil and natural gas deposits. The County's Mineral Resource Areas reflect the State of California Geological Survey's identified deposits of regionally significant aggregate resources. These clusters or belts of mineral deposits are designated as Mineral Resources Zones (MRZs) and oil and gas resources. The General Plan encourages the protection of the County's mineral resource areas, as well as the implementation of compatible land use areas surrounding and adjacent to these undisturbed deposits. It further encourages that these areas, once depleted, remain undeveloped unless safely remediated to appropriate standards for residential use. Mineral resources are more specifically addressed in the Mineral and Energy Resources section in the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### **8. Cultural Resources**

Cultural heritage resources include historic buildings, structures, Native American artifacts or sites, and districts of historical, architectural, archaeological, or paleontological significance. Cultural heritage resources officially

recognized by the California Office of Historic Preservation or identified in authoritative surveys of archaeological societies, historical societies, or academic studies are integral parts of the built and natural environments and must be considered in County land use actions. The intent of the General Plan is to protect the County's cultural heritage resources. Cultural resources are more specifically discussed in the Historical, Cultural, and Paleontological Resources section of the Conservation and Open Space Element.

### **B. Hazard and Safety Areas**

There are several identified and mapped natural hazard areas in the County that contribute to Environmental Management practices that guide land use decision-making. The intent of General Plan policy is to minimize the potential loss of life and property from potential hazardous events within these identified areas through restrictions and mitigation. Strategies and programs for minimizing risks in the following hazard areas are thoroughly discussed in the Safety Element of the General Plan.

#### **1. Fire Hazard Areas**

Los Angeles County is subject to the threat from urban fires, and especially wildland fires due to its hilly terrain, dry weather conditions, and the nature of its vegetation. In conjunction with the Forestry Division of the County Fire Department, woodland and brush areas with high fire potential have been identified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

## 2. Flood Prone Areas

Areas subject to substantial flood hazard as determined by the Department of Public Works have been identified as Flood Zone Areas. This classification includes both the watercourse itself and adjacent areas subject to overflow of flood waters during major storms.

## 3. Seismic Prone Areas

Earthquake Fault Zones, depicted on the Los Angeles County Seismic Hazards Map reflect both the active and potentially active faults identified in the countywide Safety Element, and the more detailed fault mapping prepared by the California State Division of Mines and Geology under the provisions of the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zones Act (California Public Resources Code, Division 2, Chapter 7.5).

### C. Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

With growing pressure on the County from urban expansion, open spaces have become a precious commodity for both developers and open space preservation advocates. Land in production for farming is also threatened by development pressure, creating a growing disconnect between



A Large Portion of the County is at Risk of Fire

farmers and consumers. A County Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program would seek to limit development on natural and open spaces by creating a market-based system that allows landowners in the rural areas of the County to sell their development rights as credits and/or density bonuses to infill sites, revitalization areas, or redevelopment projects in more urbanized areas of the County.

County policy seeks to steer development away from the urban fringe, and back into infill, revitalization, and redevelopment projects on urban lands with existing infrastructure. In a TDR program, landowners in designated rural areas or “Sending Areas” are allowed to sell the right to develop their land to landowners and developers in urbanized areas or “Receiving Areas”, which will be indicated geographically on County land use maps. These “credits” give rural landowners an incentive to not develop their land and preserve its rural, open space character while subsidizing urban development. The “Receiving Areas” of the County are chosen in conjunction with General Plan policies that increase housing densities along existing public transportation corridors, reduce vehicle trips and miles traveled, preserve open space and agricultural lands, and promote urban revitalization in mixed use or transit oriented districts. The initiation of a County TDR program will be accomplished through Implementation Action LU 2.1.



Flood Prone Areas Are Used for Groundwater Recharge



### D. Land Banking

An alternative to a TDR program is the practice of Land Banking. Land Banking is the act of buying land within the path of development at a premium before it reaches its maximum market value. Land Banking can be done speculatively and by non-profits and/or government agencies.

Many non-profit conservancies within the County practice Land Banking. These conservancies buy land, particularly in areas with significant ecological, biological, and topographical value, and then apply deed restrictions and/or covenants on the land that preserve it as open space in perpetuity. When a government agency practices Land Banking, it is done with the intent of having a larger say in the type of development that occurs on this land. While some lands within a land banking program could be set aside as open space in perpetuity or to create “green belts”, others could be developed with stringent development standards. This initiation of a County Land Banking program will be accomplished through Implementation Action C/OS 4.2.

### E. Mitigation Banking Policy

There are a number of ways in which a development project may be required to mitigate for unavoidable significant impacts to the natural environment such as dedication of open space, restoration efforts, or re-vegetation. However, there are times when the mitigation opportunities on the project site do not constitute sufficient ‘in-kind’ mitigation. The County’s mitigation banking policy is a vehicle whereby

mitigation may be achieved off-site through dedication of land, with ‘in-kind’ biological resources, to a state or local entity, to be held as open space in perpetuity. Projects outside of a Significant Ecological Area would be eligible to purchase land within a Significant Ecological Area as mitigation for unavoidable impacts to biological resources. The optimal realization radius for “in-kind” mitigation is two (2) miles, when feasible. This initiation of a County Mitigation Banking policy will be accomplished through Implementation Action C/OS 4.2.

## 3. HEALTHY & LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The ultimate objective of all County planning policies is to create healthy and livable communities that provide a high quality of life for the County’s residents and businesses. An important part of reaching this objective is to provide and encourage innovative and flexible planning practices that foster community development and livability while recognizing the individuality and diversity of each County community.

To this end, County land use policy supports practices and strategies that ensure each community can meet its social, economic, and environmental needs. The following land use policies support the County’s objectives for healthy and livable communities:

- A. “Green” Planning;
- B. Environmental justice;
- C. Public health in land use planning; and,
- D. Community design.

### A. “Green” Planning

Green planning involves a comprehensive approach to planning that uses goals, policies, and implementation strategies that achieve sustainable community development. The County is aggressively pursuing programs and practices that will position its departments and agencies to be leaders in green planning, and will allow the Department of Regional Planning to guide future community level planning toward desired sustainable outcomes. Examples of the most prominent “green” programs include:

#### LEED Green Building Standards

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) green building rating system, developed by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC), is a national standard for the design, construction, and operation of



Caltrans Headquarters is LEED Silver

green buildings. Green buildings are distinguished from other buildings by their holistic approach in promoting a sustainable built environment. In particular, LEED concentrates on sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, the selection of recycled or local materials, and indoor environmental quality. LEED provides a set of standards for numerous building projects including new commercial construction and major renovations, existing building operations and maintenance, commercial interiors, core and shell development, single-family homes, schools, neighborhood development, and site design for multiple buildings.

On January 16, 2007, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors passed a motion that required future construction of all County buildings over 10,000 gross square feet to meet LEED Silver or equivalent standards. This motion also began an internal review of the County's building, zoning, and subdivision codes to become LEED compliant. Due to its national prevalence and its evolving and consensus based rating system, the LEED approach was specifically addressed by the Board in this motion. Furthermore, the General Plan sets forward several policies to encourage the inclusion of LEED standards in development activities in the County. While the General Plan addresses many sustainable practices in building and development, LEED standards and certification can provide a single source to accomplish many of these sustainable goals. These goals include promoting green building practices, expanding the use of permeable surfaces and green roofs, preserving open spaces, promoting walkable communities, expanding the use of transit-oriented and mixed use developments, increasing on-site energy generation, and maximizing water conservation.

#### ***Low Impact Development (LID)***

LID is an ecosystem-based approach to stormwater management that utilizes on-site Integrated Management Practices (IMPs) to mimic a site's predevelopment hydrology. LID uses design techniques, such as maintaining recharge areas, buffer zones, open spaces, and drainage courses. It also utilizes

The Department of Regional Planning utilized SCAG's Compass Blueprint and 2% Strategy growth vision for the development of the goals, policies, and implementation action programs in the General Plan. The 2% Strategy proposes that local governments implement the following strategies:

- Focusing growth in existing and emerging centers and along major transportation corridors.
- Creating significant areas of mixed-use development and walkable, "people-scaled" communities.
- Providing new housing opportunities, with building types and locations that respond to the region's changing demographics.
- Targeting growth in housing, employment, and commercial development within walking distance of existing and planned transit stations.
- Injecting new life into under-used areas by creating vibrant new business districts, redeveloping old buildings, and building new businesses and housing on vacant lots.
- Preserving existing, stable, single-family neighborhoods.
- Protecting important open space, environmentally sensitive areas and agricultural lands from development.

infiltration swales, grading strategies, and open drainage systems to infiltrate, filter, store, and detain stormwater runoff close to its source as opposed to conveying and treating it in large and costly end-of-pipe facilities. LID employs techniques that reduce the use of pipes, ponds, curbs, and gutters in subdivisions and other infrastructure improvement projects.

A recent report completed by the Department of Regional Planning entitled Green Building Program and Low Impact Development (LID) Standards for the Unincorporated Areas of Los Angeles County provides guidance to incorporate three major "green" programs in the County:

- **Green Building:** Pertains to the implementation of LEED standards or similar requirements in the County's development standards for all appropriate or applicable industrial, commercial, and residential development. The report recommends changes to building and zoning codes and will establish baseline standards for energy efficiency, natural lighting, water conservation, the use of recycled materials, on-site energy generation, and indoor air quality.



- **Low Impact Development (LID):** Pertains to the implementation of LID practices by developing standards for new development and redevelopment projects in the County. The report recommends changes to building and zoning codes and will establish standards for LID compliance.
- **Drought Tolerant Landscaping:** Pertains to the implementation of California native and drought tolerant landscaping in all development and redevelopment projects in the County, and recommends changes to the subdivision and zoning codes that will establish standards for drought tolerant landscaping.

### B. Environmental Justice

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. A goal of the General Plan is to achieve an environmentally just County, where everyone enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards, and is provided equal access to the entitlement process.

The guiding principle of environmental justice is to rectify inequitable distribution of environmental burdens, such as pollution, industrial facilities, and distribution centers in a manner that upholds the idea of fair shares.. At the same time, environmental justice helps communities gain access

to environmental goods, such as nutritious food, clean air and water, parks, recreation, health care, education, transportation, and safe jobs. An environmentally just Los Angeles County is a place where:

- Environmental risks, hazards, and public service related environmental services such as trash hauling and landfills are equally distributed with a lack of discrimination;
- Existing and proposed negative environmental impacts are mitigated to the fullest extent to protect the public health, safety, and well-being;
- Access to environmental investments, benefits, and natural resources are equally distributed; and,
- Information, participation in decision making, and access to justice in environment-related matters are enjoyed by all.

Environmental justice efforts have won significant advances in protecting the overall health of communities by preventing the siting of polluting industries and unwanted land uses, ensuring equal regulatory protection, and demanding that communities be involved in the policy-making that affects them. The County is actively working to achieve its goal of environmental justice by focusing on the direct and indirect impacts of land use and planning decisions on living conditions of affected communities, and by integrating environmental justice principles into the goals and policies of the General Plan.

### C. Public Health in Land Use Planning

Public is addressed in the General Plan due to the growing awareness of how land use development affects public health issues at the community level. Improving the overall condition of the County's public health and well-being through innovative and health-conscious land use planning is a goal of the General Plan. At the national level, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has underscored the connection between urban planning and public health given the evidence that certain urban design and land use policies significantly increase the amount of time people engage in physical activity. The



Noise is an Environmental Justice Issue

County recognizes the need to focus attention on this important topic, and the General Plan addresses public health issues in nearly every element through its goals, policies, and implementation programs.

Environmental conditions such as poor air quality, polluted stormwater runoff, deteriorated housing conditions, and ground and surface contamination are all influenced by planning and have an effect on public health, particularly disadvantaged populations including minorities, children, and the elderly. Public agencies are taking a fresh look at the impacts of land use, community design, and transportation planning on rates of chronic disease, especially obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, mental illness, and pedestrian injury and fatality.

Within the County, numerous departments work collaboratively to help ensure that policies and programs are in place to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of all residents. As a guide to land use decision making, the General Plan is a powerful tool for addressing health-related issues. For example, the Plan includes policies aimed at:



Whittier Boulevard is Illustrative of Community Design Techniques

- Building walkable communities that are not automobile-oriented;
- Maintaining environments that improve physical and mental health, such as sustaining a vibrant park and recreation system, and preserving natural and scenic resources;
- Promoting sustainable development and agricultural practices, including the building of community gardens and the use of hydroponics and organic agricultural techniques;
- Ensuring a reliable source of potable water and appropriate wastewater treatment;
- Requiring the use of healthy materials and building practices and low impact development techniques in construction and development activities; and,
- Mitigating the environmental impacts of development while promoting economic and social opportunities.

By promoting land use development in a manner that can ultimately benefit public health, Los Angeles County is emerging as a leader in this area by creating or enhancing communities in which residents can be physically active, safe, and healthy.

#### D. Community Design

The County encourages attention to Community Design policies that will help create a “sense of place” and uniqueness within the diverse communities in the unincorporated County. The Community Design section is a practical



Common Trash Bins and Sidewalk Paving, Whittier Boulevard

reference that can be used by residents, property owners, developers, planners, and County officials in creating a “sense of place” for their neighborhoods and communities. The General Plan recognizes that more precise design criteria for specific districts or neighborhoods will need to be created and implemented through specific plans, area or community plans, community standards districts, zoning regulations and ordinances, and pilot projects. The General Plan Community Design section covers the basics of what constitutes community design, and discusses how community design principles can be utilized by County communities.

### ***What Is Community Design?***

A general County definition for community design is the practice of making sustainable, healthy, and livable communities that adapt to people’s social, economic, and environmental needs. What makes “good” community design is, however, entirely dependent on the context and perspective of each individual community. In the case of unincorporated Los Angeles County, for example, “good” community design for rural areas in the northern part of the County would be different from “good” community design for the urbanized communities of south Los Angeles County.

Community design is not necessarily about the design of a specific building or site; rather, it encompasses groups of related elements that when taken together, define a community. Examples of this include designing neighborhood

gateways, streetscape improvements on a commercial corridor, consistent landscaping for major roads and streets, and uniform signage that can designate a special district within a community. Importantly, most successful community design standards build on the characteristics of both the natural and man-made environments that are unique to each community.

### ***Los Angeles County General Design Principles***

The following general principles related to community design are helpful in formulating community design standards for those communities throughout the County that initiate a community design process. Below is a list of guiding principles that may be incorporated into new strategies to achieve community design standards.

#### ***Create a “sense of place” that is unique to the characteristics of each community or neighborhood.***

- Identify a unique district in the community or neighborhood, and design standards that will highlight the district as a focal point. Specific strategies can include uniform signage and lighting schemes, or utilizing banners and logos.
- Implement a streetscape program that beautifies sidewalks and alleyways, and coordinates the development of unique standards for street amenities such as trash and recycling bins, paving, and benches.
- Design landscaping standards for major streets and arterials.
- Create visual “gateways” throughout the community that designate to residents and visitors that they are entering a unique place.

#### ***Preserve the natural features within the community.***

- Create a trail system that utilizes the natural features of the community.
- Employ the use of buffer zones for transition areas between different land uses.
- Develop a green-belt of open space land to physically define your community.

#### ***Provide for livable, sustainable and healthy communities that create vibrant, social environments for residents and businesses.***

- Create design standards for the inclusion of community services and amenities in new development projects.
- Promote density and transit-oriented development in appropriate neighborhoods.



Community Mural



- Institute a traffic calming program that promotes the creation of landscaped medians, vegetated traffic circles or raised crosswalks.
- Utilize green-building techniques and require LEED certification and Low Impact Development standards in building and neighborhood design.

***Highlight the historic character of the community or neighborhood.***

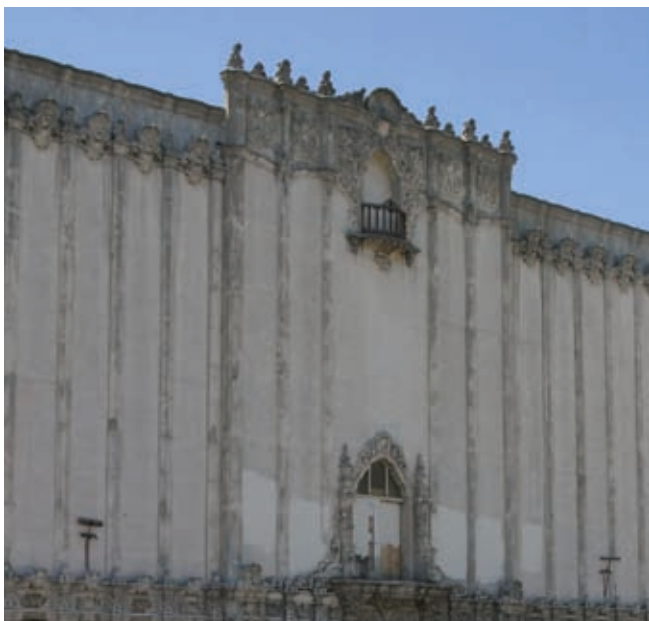
- Create an historic preservation committee to protect existing historic structures and influence the design of new buildings to adhere to a community's historic character.

***Promote architectural standards and design quality for future construction and development.***

- Implement a design manual using form-based codes that delineates specific types of architectural styles that the community wants to preserve or cultivate.
- Encourage the stealth development of utilities and undergrounding of utility lines.

***Create innovative programs and policies that promote civic pride and community involvement.***

- Develop a mural program to deter graffiti, eliminate blank walls, and express the character of the community.
- Implement a facade improvement program for commercial districts.



Potential Historical Renovation, Whittier Boulevard



Gateway, East Los Angeles Civic Center

- Initiate a tree-planting program.
- Start a community garden program.

## Community-Based Planning Program

Community-based planning is founded on the idea that public participation in the planning process effectively encourages land use decisions and development patterns that reflect the consensus of the community. The ultimate objective of community-based planning is to allow residents to feel invested in their neighborhoods and be involved in a process that shapes better communities.

### Introduction

The General Plan serves the entire unincorporated area of the County by providing general goals and policies that help to achieve countywide planning objectives. As such, the General Plan provides the land use “vision” for the County. Community-based planning allows for more detailed and issue-specific planning that builds upon the General Plan and allows communities to refine land use policy at a local level.

With the General Plan as a guide, the Department of Regional Planning will begin a community-based planning effort to create plans for the unincorporated communities that currently do not have a community or area-level plan, and to update and revise the existing community and area plans in the County. By creating a Community-Based Planning Program in the Los Angeles County General

Plan, the Department is emphasizing its commitment to community-based planning and public participation in all of its planning endeavors for the unincorporated County.

### Program Outline

The Department of Regional Planning, upon adoption of the Los Angeles County General Plan, will initiate a Community-Based Planning Program that will provide each community or collection of communities in the unincorporated County with a long-range community-based plan.

The Community-Based Planning Program ensures that each unincorporated County area or community receives some level of planning. As such, the Community-Based Planning Program is designed to be flexible and encourages cooperation and collaboration amongst residents, community groups, County departments, and other relevant stakeholders so that each plan fulfills both its legal requirements and its civic goals.

The Community-Based Planning Program will involve two major phases. The first phase will divide the unincorporated County into regional planning areas. Each regional planning area will get a foundational plan that summarizes the land use issues, development goals, and any other concerns or opportunities relevant to that region. The regional planning areas planning effort will be completed within two (2) years of the adoption of the General Plan. These regional plans will be updated as needed to keep them accurate and relevant to their respective planning areas. The second phase of the program involves the initiation of community-based plans for the specific communities in the unincorporated County with specialized planning needs, as based on the needs assessment criteria outlined below. These community-based plans will be developed or updated for all unincorporated communities within ten (10) years, and will be updated as needed to keep them accurate and relevant to each unincorporated community.

“The 59 individual "urban islands" within the Unincorporated County have never had a community-based plan.

### Needs Assessments

Regional Planning staff has established criteria for the implementation and prioritization of community-based plans. Criteria for the order in which community plans will be created or updated is based on several factors, including but not limited to:

- Population changes and other demographic characteristics;
- Population growth, extent of housing shortages, overcrowding, and jobs-to-housing imbalance;
- Geographic size of the community or set of communities;
- Zoning inconsistencies and zoning violations;
- Active community groups;
- Need to preserve the local character of the community;
- Economic conditions and other social indicators;
- Code violations and enforcement issues; and,
- Amount of development activity and/or development potential.

Using the Needs Assessment Criteria established by the Department of Regional Planning, community-based plans will be completed or updated within five (5) years of the adoption of the Plan where five (5) plans will be wither updated or created each year until every community has an up to date community-based plan. **Table 3.2** represents an alphabetical listing of communities without a plan and for communities with plans and their dates of adoption.

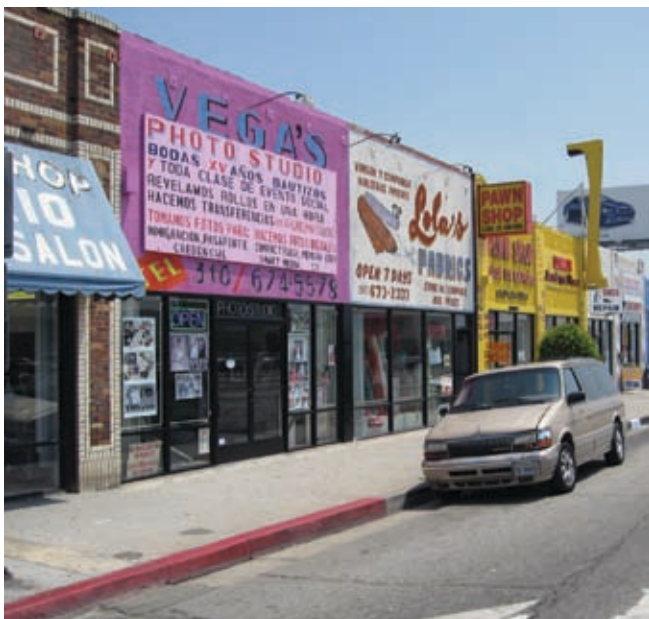
### Program Components

The primary objective of community-based planning is to allow for goals and policies that reflect more localized issues. The geographic, demographic, and social diversity of unincorporated County communities will guide the development of each community-based plan, and the goals and policies will represent the long-term planning objectives for each region or community. Each community-based planning effort will be guided by the following components:

- **Community Participation:** The Department of Regional Planning utilizes a thorough and comprehensive approach to the formation of goals, policies, and implementation actions for community-based plans. Most important to each plan is the opportunity for public participation and community feedback. A series of community meetings and outreach events will be

important components in the development of each community-based plan. Community meetings will involve a variety of activities, such as “visioning” workshops and policy roundtables, which will contribute to the creation of a community-based plan. Each plan will follow a similar process for adoption that will involve public meetings, hearing(s) with the Regional Planning Commission, and finally adoption by the County’s Board of Supervisors.

- **County Participation:** The Department of Regional Planning will seek out the assistance, support, and knowledge of other relevant County Departments during the formulation of community-based plans. At a minimum, the planning process should include, but not be limited to the participation of the Department of Public Works, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Public Health, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, and other pertinent County Departments from the initiation of the planning process until adoption.
- **Inter-Departmental Participation:** At the initiation of each community-based planning process, a representative from the Park and Recreation, Public Works, and Public Health Departments will be present to fully integrate the County’s resources and knowledge into the Plan and its implementation.



The Lennox Community Needs a Community Plan



Community Participation

- **Plan Formulation:** Once the community has compiled data and formulated the goals and policies for their planning area, a comprehensive planning document with accompanying land use policy maps will be created.
- **Zoning Consistency:** An important component of every community-based planning effort will be to address long-standing inconsistencies between land uses and zoning designations. Each community or area plan, in addition to the creation of their own plan, will conduct a zoning consistency analysis with the goal of eliminating zoning-land use discrepancies.

The role of the Department of Regional Planning in the effort to create community-based plans across the County is to guide, assist, and provide professional expertise to community members in creating plans that satisfy the goals of each individual region or community. At the same time, the Department’s planning staff will ensure that each community-based plan meets the legal requirements of the State and County Code, and also ensure that plans are consistent with the General Plan or the planning activities of neighboring jurisdictions.



**Table 3.2: Unincorporated Communities With and Without a Community-Based Plan**

Without a Plan	With a Plan (Year Adopted or Last Updated)
<b>Avocado Heights</b>	<b>Altadena Community Plan</b> (1986)
<b>Del Aire-Alondra Park</b>	<b>Antelope Valley Area Plan</b> (1986)
<b>East Pasadena/East San Gabriel/San Pasqual</b>	<b>Diamond Bar Community Plan</b> (1982)
<b>Eastern San Gabriel Valley</b> (Charter Oak, Covina Islands, East Asuza, East Irwindale, East San Dimas, Glendora Islands, North Claremont, Northeast San Dimas, Northeast La Verne, South Monrovia Islands, Walnut Islands, West Claremont, West San Dimas)	<b>East Los Angeles Community Plan</b> (1988)
<b>Florence-Firestone</b>	<b>Hacienda Heights Community Plan</b> (1978)
<b>La Crescenta-Montrose</b>	<b>Malibu Local Coastal Plan</b> (1986)
<b>Lennox</b>	<b>Marina del Rey Land Use Plan</b> (1996)
<b>Northern San Fernando Valley</b> (Kagel Canyon, Lopez canyon, Oat Mountain, Sylmar Island, West Chatsworth, Universal City)	<b>Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan</b> (being updated as One Valley, One Vision) (1990)
<b>South County</b> (East Compton, Rancho Dominguez, Lynwood Island, Westfield, La Rambla)	<b>Santa Catalina Island Local Coastal Plan</b> (1983)
<b>Southeast County</b> (South Whittier, Sunshine Acres, West Whittier, Los Nietos, North Whittier, Gateway Islands, South Diamond Bar)	<b>Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan</b> (2000)
<b>Valinda Corridor</b> (West Puente Valley, Valinda, South San Jose Hills, South Walnut)	<b>Rowland Heights Community Plan</b> (1981)
<b>Victoria/Willowbrook</b>	<b>Twin Lakes Community Plan</b> (1991)
<b>West Carson</b>	<b>Walnut Park Community Plan</b> (1987)
<b>West Rancho Dominguez</b>	<b>West Athens-Westmont Community Plan</b> (1990)
<b>Westside Islands</b> (West Los Angeles/Sawtelle VA, Franklin Canyon, West Fox Hills, Ballona Wetlands)	
<b>Whittier Narrows</b> (South El Monte, South San Gabriel, Whittier Narrows)	

## VI. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following are the goals and policies that apply to land use in unincorporated Los Angeles County:

### Goal LU-1

Efficient and progressive smart growth land use policies that address the diverse needs of all County residents.

- **Policy LU 1.1:** Encourage urban infill development on vacant, underutilized sites, and brownfield areas.
- **Policy LU 1.2:** Promote and develop transit oriented districts along major transit corridors.
- **Policy LU 1.3:** Encourage mixed use development to facilitate the proximity and linkage between housing and employment throughout the County.
- **Policy LU 1.4:** Promote land use practices that encourage housing to be developed in proximity to employment opportunities.
- **Policy LU 1.5:** Encourage compact development and increased residential density in appropriately designated areas.
- **Policy LU 1.6:** Support creative housing development that provides mixed-income, affordable, and rental housing in various housing types and densities.
- **Policy LU 1.7:** Ensure that all community plans, zoning, and subsequent development meet all Federal and State fair housing laws and regulations.
- **Policy LU 1.8:** Ensure universal accessibility in all planning endeavors to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Policy LU 1.9:** Protect rural communities by utilizing natural landforms to create buffers from urban and suburban development.

### Implementation Action LU 1.1

Apply for a SCAG 2% Compass Technical Assistance Grant for a demonstration project that targets Smart Growth initiatives in the County, such as an existing Transit Oriented District (TOD).

### Implementation Action LU 1.2

Create individual and unique mixed use zoning overlays for all areas indicated as potential Mixed Use overlays on the Land Use Policy maps.

### Implementation Action LU 1.3

Create an adaptive reuse ordinance to expedite the rehabilitation and redevelopment of older, sometimes historic buildings for new uses.

### Implementation Action LU 1.4

Create an infill development ordinance that focuses development on vacant and underutilized parcels. This ordinance should expedite permitting and provide incentives for development in these urban areas.

### Implementation Action LU 1.5

Develop a neighborhood beautification pilot program that emphasizes small steps such as façade restorations, landscaping, streetscape improvements, murals or community banners in a targeted area such as Florence-Firestone. If the program goals are achieved, use this demonstration project as a model for other distressed areas of the County.

### Implementation Action LU 1.6

Amend the existing TOD Ordinance, and study possibilities for new TOD districts throughout the unincorporated County along light rail lines and major bus routes.

### Implementation Action LU 1.7

Develop an inclusionary zoning ordinance that mandates a portion of all residential development is set aside as affordable, and create incentives to implement the policy.

## Goal LU-2

Sustainable communities that conserve resources, protect the environment, and improve public health.

- **Policy LU 2.1:** Promote or require “green building” principles, LEED certification, and Low Impact Development (LID) in all development activities.
- **Policy LU 2.2:** Encourage land use practices that minimize sprawl.
- **Policy LU 1.3:** Promote land use practices that enhance public health.
- **Policy LU 2.4:** Promote efficient community water and energy practices.
- **Policy LU 2.5:** Preserve and expand green spaces throughout the County to encourage healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy LU 2.6:** Require development to optimize the solar orientation of buildings to maximize passive and active solar design techniques.
- **Policy LU 2.7:** Support land use policy that promotes environmental justice.
- **Policy LU 2.8:** Promote sustainable subdivisions that meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Neighborhood Development standards.
- **Policy LU 2.8:** Promote compact, walkable, well-designed development.
- **Policy LU 2.9:** Limit development in special environmental management areas.
- **Policy LU 2.10:** Limit development in hazard and safety areas,

### Implementation Action LU 2.1

Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program where identified rural and open space areas under development pressure can sell their development credits to established receiving areas. Develop an accompanying map of target open space areas for the TDR program.

### Implementation Action LU 2.2

Identify greenbelts and natural buffers around rural County communities.

### Implementation Action LU 2.3

Develop a Competitive Grant Program that will provide partial funding for the retrofitting of homes and/or businesses for landscape water efficiency projects to replace traditional lawns.

### Implementation Action LU 2.4

Develop a Competitive Grant Program to fund green building projects to upgrade existing buildings to meet LEED certified or comparable standards.

### Implementation Action LU 2.5

Ensure the existing County environmental checklist recommends an analysis of environmental impacts that meet or exceed the official California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental impact checklist.

### Implementation Action LU 2.6

Employ an energy accounting program, created for the U.S. Department of Energy, as part of long-range planning program analysis. The Energy Yardstick: Using PLACE3S to Create More Sustainable Communities, is a computerized program that quantifies the energy demands associated with land use arrangements.

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## Goal LU-3

Development that is compatible with surrounding neighborhood character and the natural environment.

- **Policy LU 3.1:** Preserve the unique character of existing communities, both urban and rural, by ensuring that new development maintains the architectural style, density, and intensity of use.
- **Policy LU 3.2:** Protect the character of the County's rural communities.
- **Policy LU 3.3:** Prohibit land use development where negative environmental impacts, as determined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), cannot be mitigated.
- **Policy LU 3.3:** Encourage a diversity of commercial and retail services.
- **Policy LU 3.4:** Ensure airport operation compatibility with adjacent land uses through Airport Land Use Plans.
- **Policy LU 3.5:** Protect major landfills, solid waste disposal sites, and energy facilities from encroachment of incompatible uses.
- **Policy LU 3.6:** Ensure land use compatibility in areas adjacent to military installations and where military operations, testing and training activities occur.
- **Policy LU 3.7:** Utilize buffer zones to reduce the impacts of incompatible land uses where feasible.
- **Policy LU 3.8:** Support grassroots community design initiatives throughout the County.
- **Policy LU 3.9:** Encourage the siting of new schools at least 1,000 feet from pollution sources.
- **Policy LU 3.10:** Promote industrial park development to avoid land use conflicts associated with piecemeal development and protect existing nodes of industrial uses from incompatible uses.

### *Implementation Action LU 3.1*

Expand the County's public art program to require all new development in the County either wholly or partially funded by the County to dedicate 1% of the total cost of the project to public art projects on the site.

### *Implementation Action LU 3.2*

Create a streamlined permitting process or fee reduction for mixed use development projects in identified Mixed Use districts.

### *Implementation Action LU 3.3*

Create design guideline manuals to be used in communities throughout the County.

### *Implementation Action LU 3.4*

Update the County website with information and graphics that guides an applicant through the County entitlement process.

## Goal LU-4

Effective inter-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration in all aspects of land use planning.

- **Policy LU 4.1:** Support annexations and incorporations that adequately meet the requirements within Policy # 3.095 (City Annexations and Spheres of Influence) of the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual.
- **Policy LU 4.2:** Encourage comprehensive planning in under planned and underserved communities.
- **Policy LU 4.3:** Support inter-jurisdictional planning efforts.
- **Policy LU 4.4:** Foster a collaborative environment and include other County Departments, adjacent cities and other stakeholders in plan development activities.

### Implementation Action LU 4.1

Implement a rotating speaker's forum where the Directors of County Departments travel to other County Departments to share the issues, concerns and activities of their respective departments. This inter-agency communication will focus on increasing countywide coordination and collaboration.

### Implementation Action LU 4.2

Coordinate with local colleges and universities to partner with the County in developing plans and implementation projects. These projects could serve the County by enabling students to generate new ideas about established concepts, as well as initiate the planning process. Potential partners could include:

- The USC, UCLA, UC Irvine and Cal-Poly Pomona Urban Planning or architecture departments.
- Local Engineering departments.
- Community college GIS classes.

## Goal LU-5

Community-based plans that encompass all unincorporated County communities and lands.

- **Policy LU 5.1:** Ensure all community-based plans are consistent with the General Plan and countywide planning objectives.
- **Policy LU 5.2:** Ensure broad outreach and public participation events are scheduled for each community-based plan initiative.
- **Policy LU 5.3:** Utilize new theories in planning practices when developing community-based plans.
- **Policy LU 5.4:** Provide adequate funding, through the budget process and through grant acquisitions, to complete the community planning program.
- **Policy LU 5.5:** Update all Local, Community and Area Plans on a regular and consistent basis.
- **Policy LU 5.6:** Amendments related to the Countywide or community-based general plan documents will be brought forward only four times in a given year.

### Implementation Action LU 5.1

Within two years of adoption of the General Plan, organize the County into regional planning areas.

### Implementation Action LU 5.2

Develop new and update existing community-based plans based on community-based assessment criteria and in order of need within five (5) years of the Plan's adoption.

### Implementation Action LU 5.3

Implement a surcharge fee on building permits to pay for General Plan updates, as ruled in *Collier v. City and County of San Francisco* (2007), Cal.App.4th.

### Implementation Action LU 5.4

Create technical specifications for the digital submission of plan amendments and associated exhibits.

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# Chapter 4

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# MOBILITY ELEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Mobility Element provides an overview of the transportation infrastructure and multimodal strategies for the movement of people and goods in and around Los Angeles County. The purpose of this element is to set the policy direction for the development of a coordinated multimodal transportation system that efficiently moves people, goods, and services in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

The Mobility Element includes a discussion of the planning agencies responsible for transportation in the County, along with maps that illustrate the transportation policy for freeways, rail transit, aviation, and freight movement. All modes of transit and transportation infrastructure are included. Central to this element is the idea that existing and proposed transportation infrastructure can be made more efficient by curbing sprawl, encouraging transit-oriented development, promoting alternative modes of transportation, and enhancing system management.

The Mobility Element also contains three sub-elements, which establish the policies for a roadway, bikeway and pedestrian system in the unincorporated County that are coordinated with the networks in the County's 88 incorporated cities. The sub-elements are:

- The Los Angeles County Highway Plan;
- The Bikeway Plan; and,
- The Pedestrian Plan.

## II. BACKGROUND

The Mobility Element for the Los Angeles County General Plan provides a broad overview of transportation policy, planning, and service provision in the County. This element summarizes the challenges and constraints of our current transportation system, and offers policy guidance and strategies to reach the County's long-term transportation goals.

The mobility needs for Los Angeles County are determined by analyzing the existing multimodal transportation system, which includes freeways, arterial highways, bus and rail transit systems, airports and terminals, and non-motorized transportation modes such as bicycles and walking. The transportation infrastructure in Los Angeles County is enormous, and the condition of the transportation system is prone to dramatic and constant changes due to the size of the region's population and economic activity.

In terms of transportation planning, Los Angeles County has tough choices ahead. It is widely accepted that our current transportation system is operating beyond its capacity. Yet, population projections suggest the County will be seeing an additional two to three million residents over the next 30 years, and economists are predicting an increase of up to 400% in cargo/goods movement in that same timeframe. New proposals, such as tolling major freeways, double-decking highways, or raising the gas tax, all have varying levels of political and popular support. However, paying for transportation infrastructure will remain a critical planning issue.

“We are rapidly building a new functional unit, the metropolitan region, but we have yet to grasp that this new unit, too, should have its corresponding image

–Kevin Lynch

## The County Role in Transportation Planning

The County is not directly responsible for overall transportation planning or service provision in Los Angeles County. However, the Department of Public Works is responsible for the design, construction, operation, maintenance, and repair of roads in the unincorporated County, as well as in a number of jurisdictions that contract with the County for these services. Additionally, all of the policies contained in this Mobility Element are consistent with and supportive of the policy directions of the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), and the plans of other agencies charged with transportation planning in the County. The Mobility Element sets policy direction to alleviate transportation problems in the unincorporated areas of the County.

To support the programs that are implemented by the various transportation and governmental agencies in the County, the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) actively pursues land use strategies that help contribute to improved transportation systems and air quality. These land use strategies are as varied as promoting transit-oriented development (TOD), infill development, mixed uses, and the provision of residential density bonuses.

## Existing Conditions

Los Angeles County’s transportation systems are heavily burdened. According to SCAG, over 10 million people currently reside in the County, with estimates projecting a further climb to 12.2 million persons by 2030. In addition to being densely populated, the

County is also a major employment center. SCAG estimates that in 2005, businesses and organizations in the County employed over 4 million people.

SCAG produces an annual report entitled *The State of the Region* that tracks and evaluates Southern California’s progress and performance in a number of areas such as the economy, housing, and transportation. The following statistical summary is based on SCAG’s most recent report, *The State of the Region 2007*.

## Commuting Times and Congestion

The dominant characteristic of transportation in the County continues to be the single-occupant driver. For example, in 2005 74.7% of all people drove alone to work in the Southern California region. This is problematic because it is recognized that single-occupant vehicle use is associated with the highest level of land consumption among all transportation modes, and it also generates the highest level of environmental impacts.

Good indicators of a transportation system’s performance are the average time it takes a commuter to get to their workplace, and the level of congestion on the area’s highways and roads. Long commute times have implications on land use development and growth patterns, while highway congestion is a major source of environmental degradation.



The Use of Rail Transit is Increasing in the County





Metro Gold Line

Between 2005 and 2006, the average travel time for people in the SCAG region was 28.4 minutes, higher than both the state and national averages.

Annual statistics show that Los Angeles workers experience some of the longest commutes in the nation, and the County's congestion, a major contributor to the region's poor air quality, regularly ranks as the highest in the nation. Highway congestion results in major social costs to County residents. Long travel times and congestion increases energy and oil usage, exacerbates automobile emissions, and diminishes the region's quality of life.

Congestion also results in significant economic costs to the County. For example, goods movement activity from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, which combined constitute the world's 5th busiest container port, is a primary economic engine for the County and the Southern California region. SCAG estimates that the three major freeways out of the Ports, I-710, I-605 and SR 91, carry as much as 40,000 trucks on an average weekday. Long delays and congestion negatively affect the economy, and in 2003, total costs incurred due to congestion were estimated at almost \$12 billion, significantly higher than any other area in the U.S.

### Transit Use

SCAG reports that transit use in the region and in the County increased by 6% (or 44 million boardings) from July 2005 to July 2006. Metro, the County's transit provider, recorded an increase of 38 million boardings for 2006, reaching a total of 493 million boardings in one year. Increasing transit use in the County, which has significant implications for countywide energy savings and for improving the County's environmental conditions, is a primary goal of the County and this General Plan.

### Goods Movement

The County, with its two large ports and major aviation hub at LAX, is a key player in the movement of goods in the region. Approximately 75% of the region's air cargo traffic goes through LAX, ranking 2nd in the U.S. in value of freight shipments. When combined, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach handle a majority of the nation's imports. Almost 85% of the imports coming through the Los Angeles Customs District (LACD) arrive at the region's seaports. By 2006, total traffic at the ports has increased to over 210.4 million tons, and officials expect total traffic to more than double by 2020. Although the ports are major economic forces in the regional economy, they have also been identified as one of the largest polluters, creating unique planning challenges for County officials.



Port of Long Beach - Source: LAEDC

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Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority Headquarters, Downtown Los Angeles

Many transportation-related statistics cannot accurately portray conditions specifically related to the unincorporated areas of the County. However, it is important to recognize trends in the County as a whole. For example, according to the Metro Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County (2002), the largest percentage increase in daily trips is projected to occur in urban fringe areas of the County, most notably in the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, Santa Clarita, and the unincorporated areas of north Los Angeles County. Although the General Plan cannot directly resolve many of the transportation issues in unincorporated areas of the County, it does provide strong policy direction for individual communities in coping with this significant planning issue.

## Regulatory Framework

Transportation planning in Los Angeles County is a complex system of inter-jurisdictional networks and responsibilities. There are several federal and state policy mandates and funding directives that guide a coordinated planning process between designated Southern California agencies at all levels of government.

For consistency purposes, all local agencies responsible for transportation planning and implementation coordinate their activities to comply with the goals and policies of SCAG and Metro. Respectively, these are the federal and state designated regional and county-level transportation planning agencies that establish the Regional Transportation

Plan (RTP) and the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The County, the 88 incorporated cities in the County, and other transportation agencies engage in transportation planning activities by participating in the development and implementation of the RTP and LRTP.

## Transportation Planning Agencies

The following sections describes the primary agencies that coordinate transportation planning, provide transportation services, and maintain the transportation infrastructure in the County:

### Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)

SCAG is the regional Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the six-county region of Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Los Angeles counties. As the MPO, SCAG is mandated by the federal government to research and prepare plans for transportation, growth management, hazardous waste management, and air quality. SCAG is also responsible for developing the RTP, which is a long-range (minimum 20-year) plan that provides a blueprint for future transportation improvements and investments based on specific transportation goals, objectives, policies, and strategies. More information on SCAG's programs can be found on the SCAG website, located at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/>.



### Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro)

Metro is the transportation planning, coordinating, designing, building, and operating agency for its 1,433-square-mile service area in the County. Metro operates over 2,000 peak-hour buses on an average weekday, and also operates 87.6 miles of Metro Rail/Fixed Guideway service. The Metro Rail/Fixed Guideway system currently consists of the Metro Red Line subway system, the Metro Blue Line, the Metro Green Line, the Metro Gold Line, and the metro Orange Line Bus Rapid Transit. Metro also programs funds for 16 municipal bus operators and a wide array of transportation projects including bikeways and pedestrian facilities, local roads and highway improvements, goods movement, Metrolink, and the Freeway Service Patrol and Call Box system. In addition to operations, Metro is responsible for the development of the Long Range Transportation Plan, a 20-year blueprint for transportation planning in the County, the Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program, and the Call for Projects program, which is a competitive process that distributes discretionary capital transportation funds to regionally significant projects. More information on Metro's services and programs can be found on their website at <http://www.mta.net/>.

### The California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)

CalTrans has jurisdiction over the construction and maintenance of highways and freeways in the County. CalTrans also coordinates several statewide transportation programs that directly impact the transportation system in the County. These include: the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the Congestion and Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ), and the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP). More information can be found at the CalTrans website at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/transprog/>.

### Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW)

The Department of Public Works is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and construction of County roadways, parkways, and bridges as well as implementing improvements to relieve traffic congestion. It maintains

over 3,100 miles of major roads and local streets in the unincorporated areas of the County, and over 1,700 miles in 22 incorporated cities. This includes over 1,300 signalized intersections, 6,000 miles of striping, 170,000 traffic signs, 5,000 street lights, and 78,000 street name signs as well as pavement markings, painted curbs, and raised traffic markers. The Department of Public Works also administers recreational transportation services, community shuttles, the Hollywood Bowl Shuttle Program, and over 90 miles of bicycle trails throughout the County. More information on Department of Public Works projects and services can be found on their website at <http://ladpw.org/services/roads/>.

### Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD)

Mandated by state law, the SCAQMD and the AVAQMD develop plans and regulations for their representative air basins to achieve and maintain healthy air quality. To control emissions from cars, trucks, buses, and other mobile sources, the Districts have a comprehensive program to meet the emissions standards established by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The Federal and State Clean Air Acts require areas with unhealthy levels of air pollutants, such as Los Angeles County, to contribute to the development of a State Implementation Plan (SIP). The SIP is a compilation of plans,



Department of Public Works Road Maintenance Crew



A Multi-Modal Transportation System Provides Options

programs, district rules, state regulations, and federal control measures to improve air quality in a given region. With regulatory responsibility for the County, the SCAQMD and the AVAQMD contribute to the SIP by indicating how national and state air quality standards will be met through the development of air quality management plans. Included in these plans are strategies to reduce tailpipe emissions by promoting the use of cleaner fuels and vehicles, and reducing the number of cars on the road with alternatives such as old-vehicle scrapping, carpools, and transit. More information on SCAQMD and AVAQMD can be found on their websites at <http://www.aqmd.gov/> and <http://www.avaqmd.ca.gov/> respectively.

### Level of Service

The County's goal is to have a transportation system that operates efficiently with a minimum impact on air quality, natural resources, and communities. Levels of congestion are important indicators of how well transportation systems are performing. The Department of Public Works employs a common method for assessing the congestion of roadways in the transportation system known as level of service (LOS). Based on a roadway's volume-to-capacity ratio (the number of vehicles currently using the roadway compared to the ideal maximum number of vehicles that can efficiently use the roadway), a letter designation is assigned that represents the traffic flow conditions, or LOS. Letter designations "A" through "F" represent progressively declining traffic flow conditions. The letter "A" indicates

excellent maneuverability and stable speeds, while the letter "F" indicates a breakdown of flow and unstable, erratic speeds. LOS designations indicate whether the roadways in the County are operating in excess of the capacity for which they were designed.

**Table 4.1** provides the definitions of LOS A-F. **Figure 4.1** is a graphic representation of LOS thresholds. For further information on the LOS in your community, contact the Department of Public Works or visit their website at <http://ladpw.org/>.

## III. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County has one of the largest and most extensive transportation systems in the world. Despite continuing efforts to increase transportation services and build transportation infrastructure, County transportation systems are impacted by the demands of a growing population and wide-ranging economic activities. This section describes the individual networks that together form the multimodal County transportation system.

### Multimodal Transportation System

In Los Angeles County, where traffic congestion is annually ranked among the worst in the nation, a multimodal transportation system offers people more choices. An effective multimodal transportation system focuses on increasing the choice to travel by any of the four primary transportation modes: pedestrian, bicycle, transit and automobile. To foster a multimodal transportation system, the following objectives are important:

- Emphasize pedestrian, transit, and bicycle linkages;
- Provide safe and convenient access for all travelers; and,
- Reduce dependency on the automobile.

The key to achieving a functional multimodal transportation system is providing efficient connections between different modes. For example, most transit trips start and end with a walk, ideally along paved, well-lit, and wide sidewalks. Streets can be designed not only to move cars, but also to be safe and inviting for pedestrians, cyclists, and

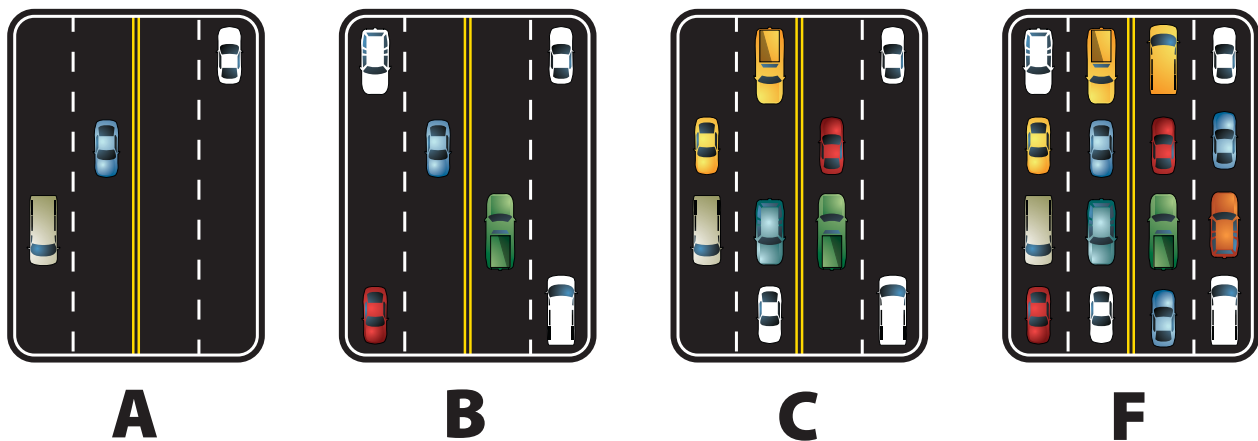


Figure 4.1: Level of Service Diagram

Table 4.1: Department of Public Works Level of Service Definitions

LOS	Type of Flow	Delay	Maneuverability
<b>A</b>	Free flow	Little or no delay	Users are unaffected by other traffic; freedom of speed and movement, level of comfort, convenience and safety are excellent.
<b>B</b>	Stable flow	Short traffic delays	Users begin to notice other traffic; freedom of speed continues, but freedom to maneuver declines slightly.
<b>C</b>	Stable flow	Average traffic delays	Traffic may back up behind turning vehicles. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted. Traffic signals operate at maximum efficiency.
<b>D</b>	Approaching unstable flow	Long traffic delays	Maneuverability is severely limited during short periods when traffic backs up temporarily. Comfort, convenience, and safety are affected. Users wait one signal cycle to pass through a signalized intersection.
<b>E</b>	Unstable flow	Very long traffic delays	Traffic volumes are at or near capacity; users wait several cycles to pass through a signalized intersection.
<b>F</b>	Forced flow	Excessive delay	Traffic volumes exceed the capacity of the street and traffic queues develop. Stop-and-go traffic conditions predominate.

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

transit users. If bicyclists have the option of bringing their bikes on board the transit system, it is more convenient for them to travel to farther destinations.

Multimodal transportation planning helps the County meet its goal of offering residents an interconnected network of streets, alleys, paths, greenways, and waterways where people can choose to walk, bicycle, take transit or, drive, when necessary. The goals and policies of the Mobility Element offer residents a framework for an accessible, efficient, environmentally sensitive, safe, and reliable multimodal system.

This section summarizes the following multimodal systems in the County:

- Freeway, Highway, and Local Road Networks;
- Public Transportation (Bus and Rail);
- Aviation Network;
- Harbors;
- Rail Networks and Goods Movement;
- Terminals;
- Bicycles;
- Pedestrians; and,
- Mobility Management.



## Freeway, Highway, and Local Road Networks

The highway network is comprised of the State Highway System, which includes U.S. Interstate Freeways, and California maintained freeways and highways, High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, and County and City highways. This network spans Los Angeles County and provides access to much of the mainland area, connecting all 88 cities and most unincorporated areas. The State Highway System in the County consists of 915 freeway and highway miles, and Caltrans estimates that on average there is more than 100 million vehicle miles traveled per day in Los Angeles County via the State Highway System (see Caltrans website for District 7 data [www.dot.ca.gov/dist07](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07)).

County and local roads contribute to the specific transportation needs of cities and all unincorporated areas. The Department of Public Works maintains over 3,100 miles of major roads and local streets in the unincorporated areas and over 1,700 miles in 22 incorporated cities. **Figure 4.2** is a map of the County's Freeway and Highway System, along with the County's airports.

## Public Transportation (Bus and Rail)

Buses provide the majority of public transit service in the County. The Metro bus system is the largest service provider in the U.S. with more than 2,000 buses operating on 185 routes. Metro also operates the Metro Rapid Bus service, which, runs on select surface street corridors with fewer stops and electronic signal switching devices to expedite traffic flow, and the Metro Express bus service, which are bus routes that are express for a portion of the route and then run either local or limited routes in other areas. The Orange Line, opened in 2005, is a landscaped fixed guideway bus rapid transitway and bike path on a 14.5 route along an east-west corridor in the southern San Fernando Valley.

At the community level there are several municipal operators that provide bus services around the County. Examples of these operators include the City of Los Angeles DASH system, the City of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, and the Antelope Valley Transit Authority. Additionally, shuttle fleet operators routinely provide public transit services. The County operates two shuttle services in unincorporated areas: the

Kenneth Hahn Trolley in Willowbrook, and the East Los Angeles shuttle. Elsewhere in the unincorporated areas, demand-responsive paratransit contractors are used to meet the needs of senior citizens and mobility-impaired individuals.

Metro also operates the Metro Rail system, which is exclusively within Los Angeles County. It consists of 17.4 miles of subway and 55.7 miles of light rail. The Metro Rail system currently consists of four lines: Red, Blue, Green and Gold. The hub of the system is in downtown Los Angeles at Union Station. The Red Line subway extends west along Wilshire Avenue in the City of Los Angeles, and north to the San Fernando Valley ending at North Hollywood. The 22-mile Blue Line light rail extends south from the 7th Street and Metro station in downtown Los Angeles to the City of Long Beach. The Blue Line was the first section of the Metro Rail system to begin operation and it includes stations in unincorporated areas at intersections with Slau-son Avenue, Florence Avenue, Firestone Boulevard, and Imperial Highway. The Green Line is a 20-mile light rail line

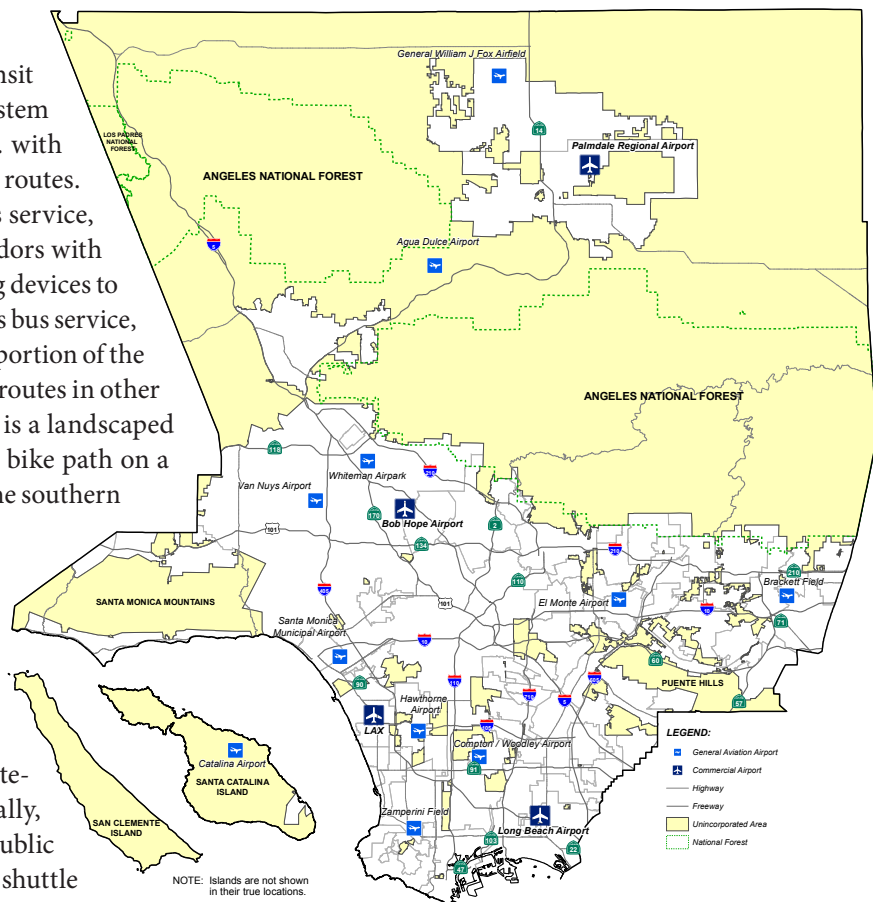


Figure 4.2: L.A. County Highways, Freeways and Airports



Los Angeles County Freeway Interchange

that serves the Los Angeles Basin from the City of Norwalk to the City of El Segundo. The Green Line has stations within unincorporated areas at the intersections of Vermont Avenue and Hawthorne Boulevard. In 2003, the 13.7-mile Gold Line light rail opened, connecting Union Station to downtown Pasadena. Construction is underway to extend the Gold Line another 6 miles from Union Station to unincorporated East Los Angeles by 2009, as well as from Pasadena to Claremont by 2015. A new Metro light rail line, the Exposition line, which will run from the 7th Street and Metro Station through Exposition Park to Culver City, began construction in 2006, and is expected to be completed by 2015.

Two additional rail service operators that provide services in Los Angeles County are Metrolink and Amtrak. The Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) operates the 416-mile Metrolink commuter rail system, which has its hub at Union Station in downtown Los Angeles and extends to Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, and San Diego Counties. The Metrolink commuter rail service has operated since 1992. As the national passenger rail service, Amtrak provides interstate

service from points around the nation to Union Station as well as regional service between major cities throughout California.

Though the County offers very limited direct public transportation service, it plays an important role in establishing policies, promoting specific projects, and funding for these services; all five County Board of Supervisors participate as voting members on the 13-member MTA Board of Directors. Two members of the County Board of Supervisors are also on the SCRRRA Board of Directors. **Figure 4.3** is a map of the County's public rail systems.

## Aviation Network

There are 15 public-use and joint-use airports located in the County. The majority of passenger air transportation is serviced through Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), Burbank-Glendale-Pasadena Airport (BUR, also called the Bob Hope Airport), and the Long Beach Airport (LGB). Another commercial airport, the Palmdale

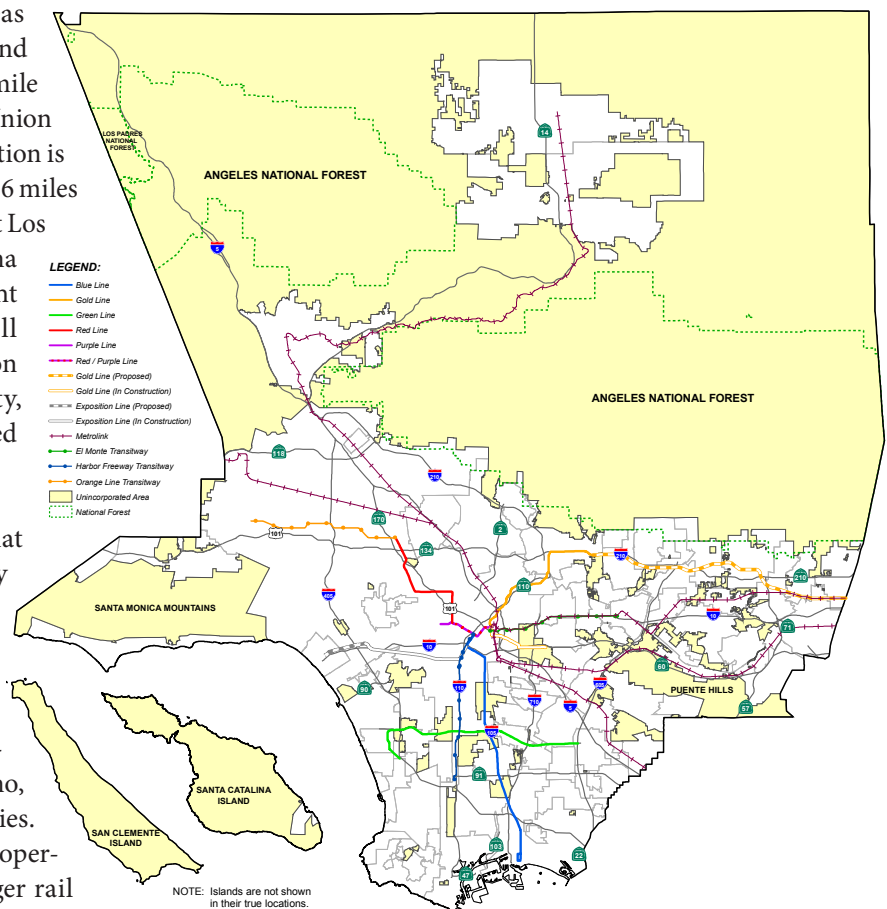


Figure 4.3: Major Public Transit Systems in L.A. County



Regional Airport, is owned and operated by the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA), which is the aviation authority for the City of Los Angeles. LAWA, which also operates LAX, is currently preparing a new Master Plan for the Palmdale Regional Airport, as commercial flights resumed in June 2007. **Table 4.2** is a list of the airports and owners in the County, and these airports are shown in **Figure 4.2**.

In 2006, SCAG estimated that air travel in the region reached approximately 88 million annual passengers, and approximately 75% of the region's cargo traffic went through LAX in 2005. SCAG expects that the County will continue to have population growth, an increase in air travel passengers, and continued increases in air cargo traffic. In terms of airport planning, these trends are problematic. By 2000, LAX had far exceeded its design capacity of 40 million annual passengers, and by 2005 it was serving 61.5 million passengers, or about 70% of all regional air passenger travelers. LAX, BUR, and LGB are located in built-out urbanized areas with little opportunity for capacity enhancement. Additionally, due to air quality concerns over capacity enhancement and noise restrictions, communities around these airports



Los Angeles International Airport - Source: Pictometry International Corp

have organized political opposition to airport expansion efforts. As such, airport expansion and planning efforts face considerable challenges.

#### Airport Land Use Commission

The California Legislature enacted the State Aeronautics Act (Division 9, Part 1, of the California Public Utilities Code) to assure orderly development of each public use airport and the surrounding areas in order to promote the objectives of airport noise standards and to prevent the creation of new noise and safety problems. The Act also designated the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for the County.

The ALUC is required to adopt a comprehensive Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan (ALUCP) for public use airports within its jurisdiction. It is, however, the responsibility of each city to ensure compatible land uses in the vicinity of airports using the uniform policies and standards contained in the ALUCP. The ALUC also reviews local plans and land use activities proposed within each airport's planning boundary, including actual airport area and ownership, as well as areas subject to noise impacts and safety hazards, such as the approach and runway protection zones. The ALUC has no jurisdiction over the operation of airports or authority over any land uses regardless of compatibility with airport activities. However, the General Plan is consis-



LAX - Source: LA Inc.



tent with all airport land use policy including all ALUCPs that effect public use airports in unincorporated areas of the County.

Realizing the need for a more comprehensive set of airport land use compatibility policies for the County, the ALUC began a process in 2002 to update its plans. More information on the Los Angeles County Airport Land Use Commission can be found on the Department of Regional Planning's website at <http://planning.county.gov/spALUC.htm>.

### Harbors

The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are key links in the global economy and can handle a wide variety of cargoes including containers, bulk products, and automobiles, as well as passenger cruise ships. Combined, they are one of the largest and most efficient international shipping ports in North America, and the fifth busiest container port in the world. The Southern California Association of Governments reports that in 2005, the two ports combined for a total traffic of 210 million tons, including over 15.8 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU).



Alameda Corridor

Source: ACTA (Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority)

**Table 4.2: Los Angeles County Public and Private-Use Airports.**

Airport	Location	Ownership
Agua Dulce	Agua Dulce	Private
Burbank (Bob Hope)	City of Burbank	Airport Authority
Brackett Field	La Verne	Los Angeles County
Catalina	Catalina Island	Private
Compton/Woodley Field	City of Compton	Los Angeles County
El Monte Field	City of El Monte	Los Angeles County
General William J. Fox Airfield	City of Lancaster	Los Angeles County
Jack Northrup Field (Hawthorne Municipal)	City of Hawthorne	City of Hawthorne
Long Beach Municipal	City of Long Beach	City of Long Beach
Los Angeles International	City of Los Angeles	City of Los Angeles (LAWA)
Santa Monica Municipal	City of Santa Monica	City of Santa Monica
Palmdale Regional Airport	City of Palmdale	City of Los Angeles (LAWA)
Van Nuys Airport	Van Nuys (Los Angeles)	City of Los Angeles (LAWA)
Whiteman Field	Pacomia (Los Angeles)	Los Angeles County
Zamperini Field	City of Torrance	City of Torrance

The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles are heavily investing in infrastructure to handle a projected doubling of container volumes by 2010. However, the Ports have also been identified as one of the largest sources of air pollution in the region. In response, the Ports have created a Clean Air Action Plan in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency, the California Air Resources Board, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District to reduce emissions related to port operations. Balancing the economic need for the efficient movement of goods in and out of the Ports, and the desire for a clean and healthy environment is a primary planning challenge.

### Rail Networks and Goods Movement

The County has an extensive rail network that is focused on ensuring the efficient and safe movement of goods throughout the region. An effective goods movement system requires the elimination of at-grade crossings, and the creation and operation of new rail networks, such as the Alameda Corridor. **Figure 4.4** presents the freight and passenger rail lines that run through the County.

### Alameda Corridor

The Alameda Corridor is a 20-mile rail cargo corridor with a 10-mile below-grade “trench” between the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and the central Los Angeles freight yard transfer stations. The Alameda Corridor has been instrumental in efficiently transporting goods from the ports to inland transfer stations. A continuation of the Alameda Corridor Project from central Los Angeles eastward 35 miles through the San Gabriel Valley past Pomona and onward to the transcontinental rail network began in 1999. Known as the Alameda Corridor East (ACE) Project, the \$910 million eight-year endeavor of mobility and safety improvements includes signalization upgrades, roadway widening, and twenty (20) grade separations.

### Terminals

Terminal facilities provide multiple uses, from park-and-ride lots for daily commuter vehicles to the heavily used freight terminals that serve the County’s ports. Terminal operations and attendant infrastructure are very consumptive land uses, have varying degrees of activity, intensity and density, and are often characterized as having heavily polluting activities. Land use decisions related to terminals are impacted by the need to appropriately site facilities that efficiently serve the large goods movement infrastructure in the County, and by the need to construct and enhance existing County terminal facilities.

The County’s goods movement network is reliant on efficient terminal operations. Fierce competition among west coast cities for international trade business has led to the planning and construction of an efficient terminal network in the County. The most notable terminal facilities are the inter-modal terminal networks located in and around the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the goods transfer stations located near downtown Los Angeles, and several freight and trucking facilities in the City of Industry.

### Bicycles

In 2006, Metro released its Bicycle Transportation Strategic Plan (BTSP). The BTSP coordinates the countywide bicycle transportation planning efforts of the cities, the County, and other transportation agencies.

The intent of the BTSP is to include bicycles in all transportation planning efforts in order to develop regionally significant bicycle facilities, improve mobility and fill in the gaps of the inter-jurisdictional bikeway network. The BTSP argues that the use of bicycles as an alternative to the automobile will relieve congestion, improve air quality, reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle trips, and increase transit viability. The BTSP is a compilation of the existing bike plans, facilities, and bikeways from all of the jurisdictions within the County. The data provided within the BTSP includes the location of existing and proposed bicycle facilities, activity centers, transit facilities and bicycle parking, estimates on future bicycle ridership based on current trends, and estimates of future expenditures based on past allocations. By providing this regional information to local transportation agencies Metro intends to increase inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination in the development of an effective countywide bicycle transportation system.

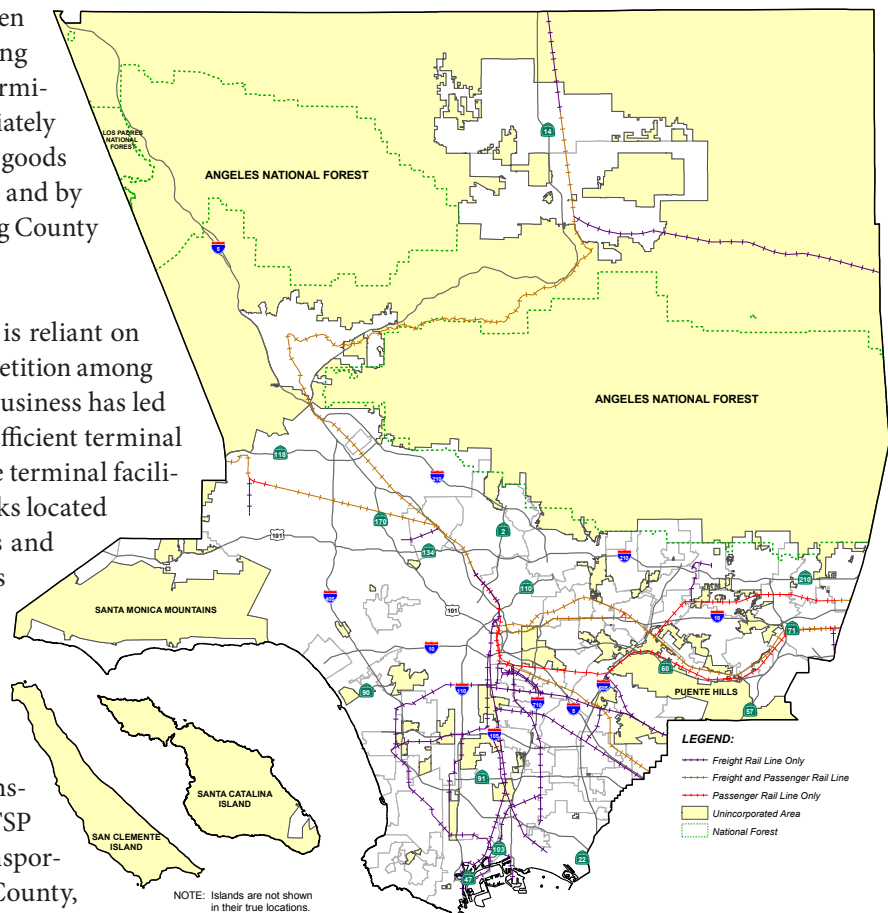


Figure 4.4: Freight and Passenger Rail Lines in L.A. County



Pedestrian Infrastructure is Lacking in Los Angeles

Additionally, the County is beginning the process of creating a Bicycle Master Plan, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Public Works, Regional Planning, and Parks and Recreation. The Bicycle Master Plan will update the County's 1975 Bicycle Plan and will provide policy guidance for building a comprehensive bicycle network throughout the unincorporated County. The Bicycle Plan sub-element of the Mobility Element contains more detailed information on the existing County Bicycle Plan.

### Pedestrians

The use of the automobile as the primary mode of travel has had a detrimental effect on alternative modes of transportation, and in particular, walking. An automobile-oriented community increases distances between buildings, decreases the density and intensity of land uses, and expands the roadway network, all neglecting pedestrians.

Making a community walkable calls for more than just adding sidewalks. The ease of street crossings, sidewalk continuity, street connectivity, and topography all play a role in making a community walkable. Older neighborhoods in the County share a historic development pattern that is conducive to walking; a grid of connected streets with sidewalks on both sides and a dense mix of land uses.

In the County, the way subdivisions and projects are designed will play a significant role in the improvement of pedestrian mobility. The expansion of the transit system,

increased land use densities, the promotion of alternative modes of transportation, and development oversight are all means the County can pursue to heighten the role of walking to personal mobility.

The latest federal transportation funding act, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), and its predecessors, have endorsed and funded the development of alternative modes of transportation with an emphasis on pedestrians. Federal programs with pedestrian funding for local authorities can be found in the Surface Transportation Fund, which includes Transportation Enhancement Activities and Hazard Elimination and Railway-Highway Crossing Programs, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, the Recreational Trails Program, the National Scenic Byways Program, Job Access and Reverse Commute Grants, High Priority Projects, and Designated Transportation Enhancement Activities.

### Mobility Management

Mobility Management refers to various strategies that can improve the efficiency of transportation resources. In Los Angeles County, where building new highways is too expensive and widening roads is politically difficult, mobility management is an especially important strategy for reducing congestion.





Metrolink Reduces VMTs

Mobility management emphasizes the movement of all people and goods through planning activities related to all modes of transportation, whether it is auto, transit, or pedestrian-focused. Mobility management is also most effective in exceptionally congested regions, such as Los Angeles County. There are different mobility management strategies that are designed to address a variety of impacts, such as:

- Increasing transportation options to reduce VMT or to relieve traffic congestion;
- Developing incentives that change travel behavior, such as offering employer-based transit passes or increasing transit availability; and,
- Reducing the need to travel through efficient land uses, such as encouraging TODs and infill development over sprawl.

Mobility management strategies are designed to be used alone, or as a program of policies that have a cumulative effect on improving the efficiency of the transportation system. The General Plan promotes several mobility management policies and supports

other County agencies with transportation authority to implement strategies that improve the countywide multi-modal transportation system.

### Rideshare

Commute Smart (<http://www.commutessmart.info/>), funded by Metro, the Orange County Transportation Authority, the Ventura County Transportation Commission, and San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, is an example of a mobility management program that encourages an alternative to driving alone. Commute Smart promotes and coordinates carpooling, vanpooling, transit use, and walking as well as “smart work” strategies such as telecommuting, flextime, or compressed work schedules.

### Traffic Calming

Traffic calming refers to the various strategies and transportation design techniques that can be implemented to reduce traffic speeds and improve pedestrian safety on a particular roadway. Projects that utilize traffic calming designs can range from small changes, such as raising the elevation of crosswalks, to larger strategies that re-design entire roads by reducing lanes and adding landscaped medians. Some of the most popular traffic calming strategies include:



Metro Red Line



Traffic Circle or Round About - Source: DPW

- Curb extensions, which includes planted medians and sidewalk expansions planters that narrow traffic lanes, provide pedestrian refuges in the middle of a street, and reduce the overall distance that pedestrians must cross at an intersection;
- Bulb outs on residential streets, which narrow intersections and increase the visibility of pedestrians;
- Roundabouts (or traffic circles);
- Raised, tabled, or colored crosswalks with special pavement treatments, such as cobblestone or brick; and,
- Speed bumps.

When properly designed and implemented, traffic calming measures have been proven to positively impact traffic speeds, traffic volumes, and pedestrian safety. These impacts have resulted in increased pedestrian and bicycle activity, reduced noise, and in many neighborhoods, initiated further community beautification programs. Due to the many benefits of traffic calming, the Department of Regional Planning, in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, is promoting the implementation of a traffic calming program in unincorporated areas throughout the County.

## IV. HIGHWAY PLAN

The Los Angeles County Highway Plan (formerly known as the Master Plan of Highways) was initially adopted on February 27, 1940. It has been amended numerous times in response to the changing transportation environment in the unincorporated areas of the County. The Highway Plan initially served as the transportation plan for the County, but with the adopted General Plan and Transportation Element of 1980, the Highway Plan became a sub-element. The Highway Plan remains a sub-element, with modifications and amendments in this updated General Plan.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Highway Plan is: 1) to depict the general location of planned highway routes throughout the County, 2) to provide a means for protecting highway right-of-way within the unincorporated area, 3) to establish a plan and process for coordinating highway policies with neighboring cities and counties, and 4) to provide for a system of highways that are consistent with other policies of the General Plan. The Interdepartmental Engineering Committee (IEC) composed of the Director of Planning, Road Commissioner, and County Engineer, is the organization charged with maintaining the County Highway Plan.



Highway 101 Soon After It's Opening, Near Downtown

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A2





Highway Congestion is Worsening

### Development Process

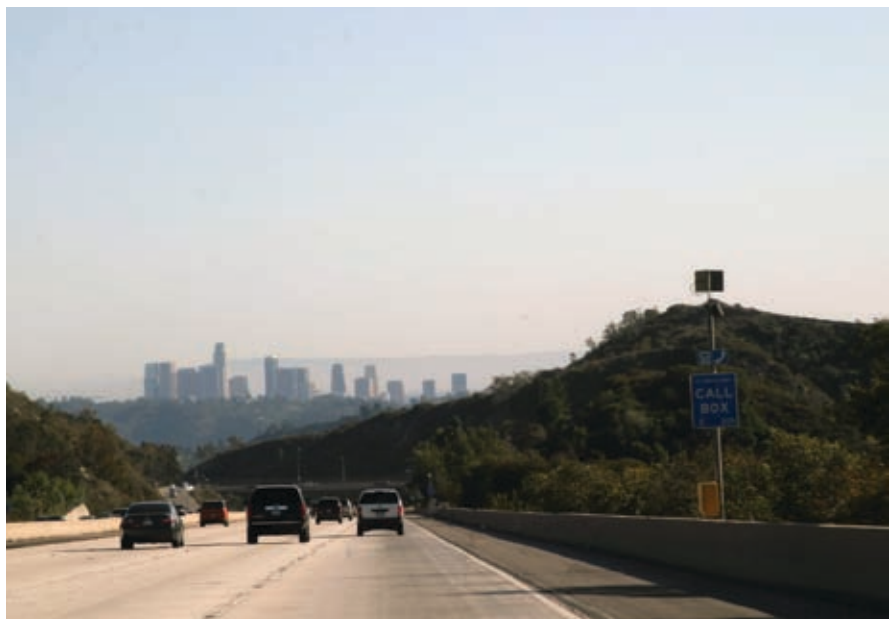
An updated version of the Highway Plan Map was developed in conjunction with the updated General Plan. Though the County has virtually no jurisdiction over roads in the 88 cities, or the freeways and other state routes administered by CalTrans, these roadways were added to the Plan for reference and visual continuity. Since many of these government entities have different classification systems for roads within their boundaries, descriptions of roadway widths were used to convert all roadways to the County system.

A comprehensive review and evaluation of the County Highway Plan map revealed that many changes were necessary to improve existing conditions on the County highway system. The Highway Plan proposes to correct misalignments of highways between the County and adjacent cities to ensure that movement efficiencies are achieved between jurisdictions. The plan also proposes to both correct certain problems that affect specific locations and generally enhance the highway system within unincorporated areas.

### Route Classifications

The Highway Plan illustrates the existing and proposed location of major arterial highways throughout the County. It is intended to provide a highway system consistent with the distribution of land uses as depicted in the Land Use Element by providing adequate highways to serve residential and commercial needs. The routes shown on the Highway Plan Map are classified according to the following system:

- **Major Highways:** These highways in urban areas and some rural areas are of countywide significance and are, or are projected to be, the most heavily traveled routes. These roads generally require four or more lanes of moving traffic, center medians and, to the extent possible, access control and limits on intersecting streets. The standard right-of-way width for a major highway is 100 feet, but this width may vary to meet extenuating circumstances. Key inter-urban connectors, non-urban access ways and recreational roads are also classified as major highways. The bulk of these routes are not planned for urban type improvement. However, the full major highway right-of-way width of 100 feet or more is generally required to maintain adequate safety and noise standards.
- **Secondary Highways:** These urban routes and some rural routes serve or are planned to serve an area-wide or countywide function, but are less heavily traveled than



State Highway 2, Driving into Downtown Los Angeles





Interstate Highway 105 On Ramps

major highways. In a few cases, routes that carry major highway levels of traffic are classified as secondary highways because it is impractical to widen them to major highway standards. In addition to the countywide function, secondary highways frequently act as oversized collector roads feeding the countywide system. In this capacity the routes serve to remove heavy traffic from local streets, especially in residential areas. In urban areas, secondary highways normally have four moving lanes of traffic on 80 feet of right-of-way, but configuration and width may vary with traffic demand and conditions on the ground. Access control, especially to residential property and minor streets, is desirable along these roads. The secondary highway classification also applies to connector highways to and between non-urban communities. In the flat lands of the Antelope Valley, acquisition or retention of 80 feet of right-of-way for many of the non-urban access routes is required for traffic safety and/or to allow for multiple uses of the right-of-way. In non-urban areas, secondary highways are ordinarily improved with only two lanes of moving traffic. Additional traffic lanes, left-turn pockets and other facilities may be provided where traffic conditions or the nature of development on adjacent property warrants it.

- **Limited Secondary:** These routes are typically located in remote foothill, mountain and canyon areas. Their primary function is to provide access to low-density

settlements, ranches and recreational areas. The standard improvement for limited secondary routes is two traffic lanes on 64 feet of right-of-way. Typically, such improvements consist of 28-30 feet of pavement with graded shoulders. Left-turn pockets and passing lanes may be provided when required for traffic safety. The right-of-way may be increased to 80 feet for additional improvements where traffic or drainage conditions warrant. The measurement of the 20 feet uniform building setback shall begin 40 feet from the centerline of all limited secondary highways in order to preserve proper sight distances. This setback shall be in addition to any yard requirement contained in the Zoning Ordinance, Title 22 of the County Code.

- **Parkways:** These apply to urban and non-urban routes having park-like features either within or adjacent to the roadway. The width of right-of-way varies as necessary to incorporate these features, but shall not be less than 80 feet. Roadway improvements vary depending upon the composition and volume of traffic carried.
- **Freeways and Expressways:** These are State of California designations that apply to some routes shown on the County Highway Plan. A freeway is a high-speed, high-capacity, limited-access road serving regional and countywide travel. Freeways are generally used for long trips between major land use generators. Major streets cross at a different grade level. An expressway



Hawthorne Boulevard, a Major Highway

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is a divided multi-lane major arterial street for through traffic with partial control of access and with grade separations at major intersections.

**Figure 4.5** is a map depicting the Los Angeles County Highway Plan. For further information of the Highway Plan, please contact the Department of Public Works or the Department of Regional Planning.

## V. BIKEWAY PLAN

There are a number of trails, paths, and transportation systems in the County that are available for use by bicyclists, such as roadways with bike lanes or routes, dedicated bike paths, decommissioned rail rights-of-way, and river channel embankments. Together, these systems constitute a comprehensive grid network for accommodating bicycle transportation throughout the County.

Promoting bicycle use in the County is important because bicycles are a non-polluting, quiet form of transportation. They do not consume energy and are very economical to purchase, operate, and maintain. Since they are so economical, they are readily available to most segments of the population, and they contribute to the general health of the users by keeping them physically active.

The Los Angeles County Bikeway Plan was first adopted in 1975. Today, it exists as a sub-element of the Mobility Element of the General Plan. In 2008, the County began the process of creating a Bicycle Master Plan, a collaborative effort between the Departments of Public Works, Regional Planning, and Parks and Recreation. The Bicycle Master Plan will update the County's 1975 Bicycle Plan and will provide policy guidance for building a comprehensive bicycle network throughout the unincorporated County. For further information on the existing Bicycle Plan adopted in 1975, please contact the Department of Regional Planning.

## Bikeway Planning Obstacles

Bicycle use has not become a viable alternative to the automobile, in part due to the insufficient designation and construction of bike paths, lanes, and routes. Because of the County's dependence on motor vehicles as the primary means of transportation, many of the existing roadways in the County are congested with excessive motor vehicle traffic, leaving no room to accommodate bicycle infrastructure and facilities. Additionally, much of the urban development along many of the arterial roadways presents problems for biking due to the high parking demand along roadways as well as insufficient space adjacent to the road to accommodate widening for bike lanes.

In addition to the lack of bike lanes in the County, a frequent complaint of bicyclists is the absence of adequate facilities to secure their bicycles at public buildings or facilities. To alleviate this situation, local governmental agencies must take the initiative to ensure that adequate bike racks, lockers or other devices are provided for the convenience of the

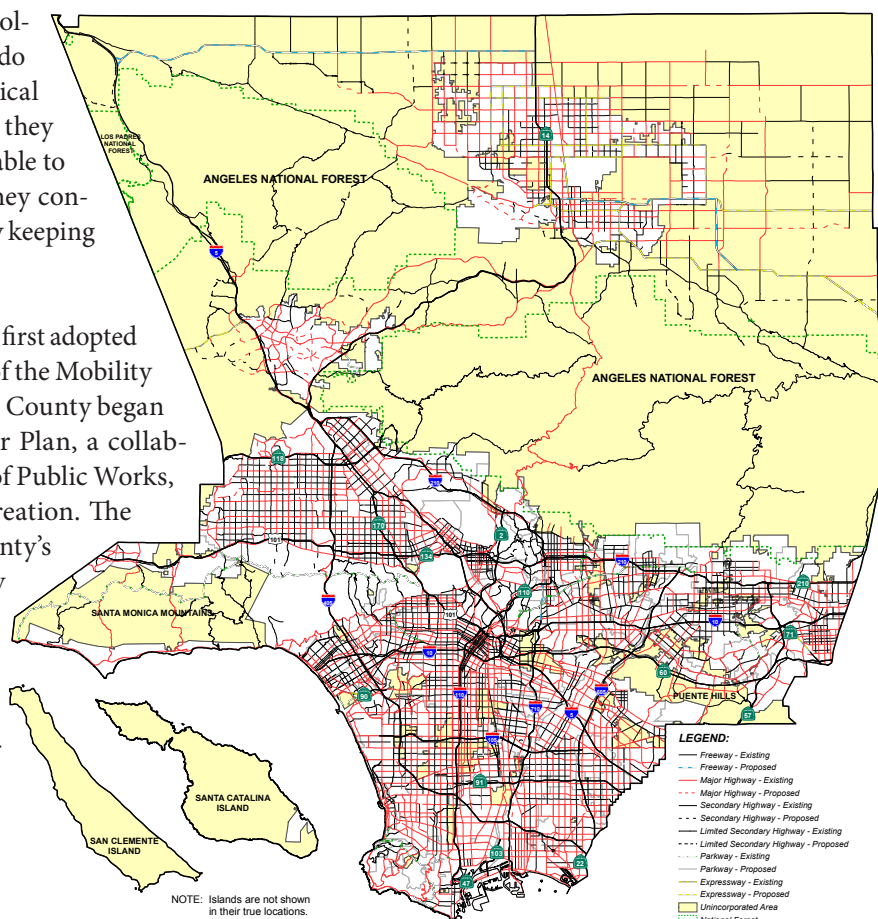


Figure 4.5: L.A. County Highway Plan

bicycling public. For any bicycle facility to effectively attract bicycle usage by the general public, it must also be properly maintained.

### Bikeway Plan Map

The entirety of surfaced roadways in Los Angeles County is used by the bicycling public even though they are not all identified as bikeways. The Vehicle Code allows this use and it is anticipated that this Code will continue to allow roadways to be used by bicyclists in the future. However, the lack of public awareness and the safety concerns associated with road sharing create a need for the development of bicycle routes with a grade separation, lane delineation, or designated trail/path construction for bicycle users throughout the County.

The Bikeway Plan Map depicts bike routes of regional importance throughout the County as well as routes of local importance in the unincorporated areas. The plan focuses on routes for both recreational use and commuter travel. Detailed information on the bikeway categories contained on the map can be found in the Mobility Element of the Technical Appendix to the General Plan.

The Bikeway Plan Map shown in **Figure 4.6** is the 1975 County Bicycle Plan map, which will remain in effect until a new one is created with the County's Bicycle Master Plan update.

## VI. PEDESTRIAN PLAN

Los Angeles County is characterized by urban, suburban, and rural communities. This diversity in the built environment creates several distinct conditions, opportunities, and challenges for pedestrians. There are a number of trails and paths in the County that are available for use by pedestrians, such as sidewalks, hiking trails, over and under passes, and skywalks. Together, these systems constitute a network for accommodating pedestrian travel throughout the County, but the system is far from adequate. The automobile has been the primary means of transportation in the County over the past 60 years, and this has created many barriers to pedestrian safety and travel.

The Los Angeles County Pedestrian Plan is a new sub-element of the Mobility Element which promotes safe and reliable pedestrian activity. As a new sub-element, the County Pedestrian Plan will be implemented in coordination with other County Departments over time and updated with each General Plan review.

### Purpose

The County recognizes that pedestrian mobility is a cost-effective and healthy transportation alternative to driving. Additionally, creating walkable communities is a critical component of the County's greenhouse gas reduction goals. The Pedestrian Plan was created to plan for and to implement an interconnected network of countywide pedestrian paths to accommodate pedestrian transportation in the County. The Pedestrian Plan sets forth specific design guidelines and characteristics that both new developments and redevelopments can utilize to better create pedestrian environments throughout the County.

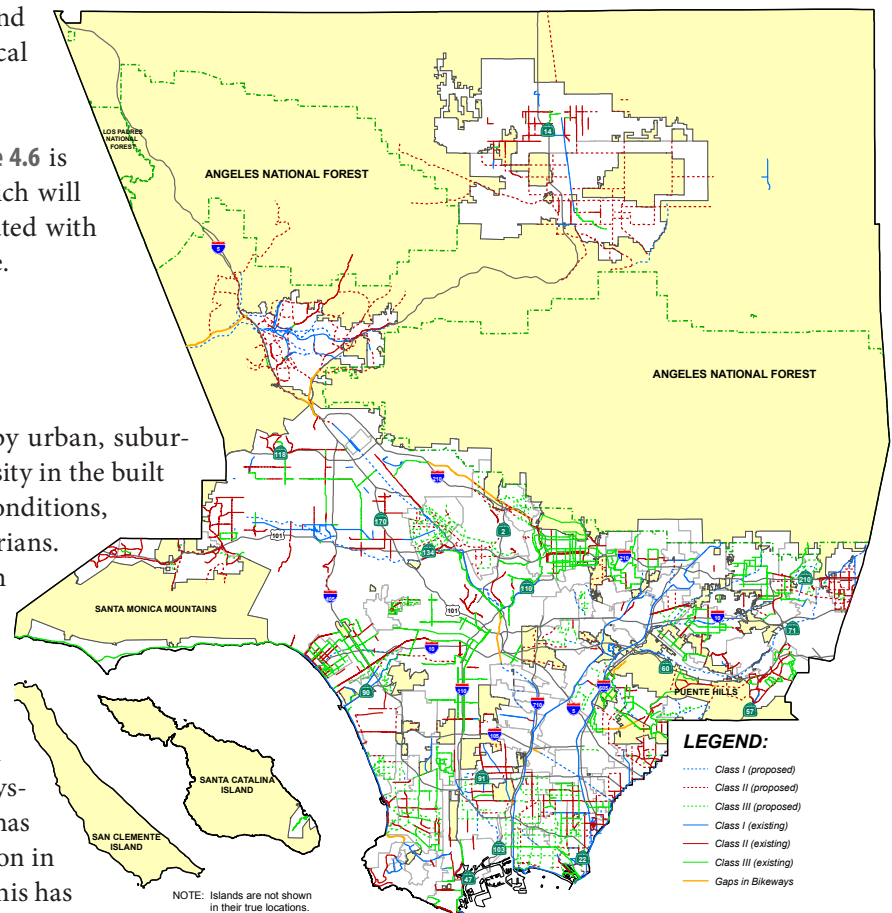


Figure 4.6: L.A. County Bikeway Plan Map





Both Bicycles and Automobiles Must Follow the California Vehicle Code

The Pedestrian Plan puts an emphasis on increasing the connectivity of pedestrian paths to and from public transportation, major employment centers, shopping centers, and government buildings, eliminating the gaps in the system, building communities that facilitate walking behavior, and breaking down the barriers to pedestrian travel both physically and psychologically. Special attention must be afforded to the elderly and people with disabilities to ensure accessibility and ease of movement for all who use the pedestrian network.

### Design Guidelines

The following guidelines were developed in fall 2007 in conjunction with a Masters class on Transportation Policy at the University of California Irvine's School of Social Ecology; Planning, Policy and Design. Students were asked to develop a Pedestrian Plan for Los Angeles County, and a set of guidelines was produced to provide specific specifications to make the myriad County communities more pedestrian friendly. The following design elements and standards are considered important components of pedestrian planning in the County and should be incorporated into all projects and development plans:

- Improving the Pedestrian Environment;
- Security, Lighting and Heightened Visibility;
- Providing Adequate Space for Pedestrians and Bicycles;
- Limitations on Curb Cuts;
- Building Orientation and Setbacks;
- Weather Protection Availability;
- Providing Transit Centers, Waiting Areas and Seating;
- Avoiding Blank Facades; and
- Providing Trees, Landscaping, and Open Spaces.

### Improving the Pedestrian Environment

Creating a pleasant environment for walking or bicycling can greatly influence the number of people willing to walk or ride as an alternative to driving. People are likely to walk or ride further and more often when the streetscape offers more attractions and when they feel comfortable, and secure. The primary goal of the County Pedestrian Plan is to create and improve the pedestrian environment in unincorporated County communities.

The following guidelines provide policy direction for pedestrian-level planning in future development opportunities in the County.



Cluttered Sidewalks and a Lack of Bicycle Infrastructure Deter Pedestrians



Pedestrian-Friendly Sidewalks

### Security, Lighting, and Heightened Visibility

Lighting for pedestrian pathways should provide adequate illumination to ensure personal safety with increased illumination around building entrances and transit stops. Lighting should be integrated into the architectural character in terms of both illumination and fixtures. Lighting should not produce glare or negatively influence off-site uses or traffic on adjacent streets.

### Provide Adequate Space for Pedestrians and Bicycles

Sidewalks and bike paths or lanes must be wide enough to accommodate the existing and projected volume of pedestrian and bicycle activity if they are to offer a quick and convenient means of travel. In setting standard sidewalk widths, communities should consider both the paved width and the unobstructed width available for walking. This is especially important for curbside sidewalks because obstructions (e.g., light poles, parking meters) are more likely to be located in the sidewalk.

In general, a uniformly wide sidewalk is preferable to a narrow sidewalk that is widened around obstructions. Activities or conditions that impede pedestrian and bicycle travel should be minimized. Sidewalks must also accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. For example, excessive slopes can create problems for those with disabilities, and sidewalk slopes exceeding 8.3 percent are not considered “accessible.” A minimum 48-inch clearance is needed to provide an “accessible route of travel” for a wheelchair.

Where feasible, designate adequate road allowance widths along arterial and collector roads to permit sufficiently wide sidewalks to accommodate street furniture, bus shelters, and other pedestrian amenities. Sidewalks should be constructed to meet the following minimum widths:

Curb sidewalks should maintain a minimum unobstructed width of two feet less than the required sidewalk width. The entire required width of setback sidewalks should be unobstructed. Curb sidewalks should be a minimum of eight feet wide at transit stops. A setback sidewalk should be separated from the curb by a planting strip at least four feet in width. The planting strip may be paved in neighborhood commercial areas and should be paved at transit stops.

### Limitations on Curb Cuts

Curb-cut restrictions can reduce vehicle-pedestrian conflict points and preserve on-street parking. Driveways crossing the Pedestrian System should be minimized and joint use of driveways encouraged to separate vehicles and pedestrians. Curb cuts for off-street parking facilities should comply with the following standards when possible:

- In residential districts, the maximum width of a curb cut should be 20 feet at the street line.
- In business and industrial districts, the maximum width of a curb cut should be 30 feet.



Walkable Streetscape

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Complete Streets for Pedestrians and Transit

No more than one curb cut per lot for lots with less than 100 feet of frontage should be allowed. A maximum of one curb cut for every 100 feet of street frontage or portion thereof should be allowed for lots having frontage in excess of 100 feet.

#### **Building Orientation and Setbacks**

Include provisions to reduce building setbacks, which add to pedestrian comfort by enclosing, defining, and providing a sense of continuity to the streetscape. Buildings with display windows directed toward the sidewalk provide added activity and interest to attract pedestrians. Primary ground floor building entrances should have an entrance oriented to streets, plazas, and/or open space. Buildings should abut the street front sidewalk and orient the primary entrance, or entrances, toward the street. Buildings, excluding parking structures and accessory structures, should be located as close to the street lines of the lot as practicable while complying with the setback. Anchor retail buildings may have their entries from off-street parking lots; however, on-street entries are strongly encouraged. Building setbacks from public streets should be minimized. "Build-to" lines should be established which reflect the desired character of the area and bring buildings close to the sidewalk.

#### **Weather Protection Availability**

Automobile travel offers protection from inclement weather as well as the opportunity to sit while traveling. Pedestrian and bicycle travel involve, by their very nature, some

exposure to the elements. However, simple facilities can afford basic protection from wind, rain, and intense sun that can discourage pedestrians and cyclists. Buildings should be designed to provide for weather and wind protection at the ground level. Buildings fronting a street should provide pedestrian weather protection by way of awnings, or overhangs, a minimum of 48 inches in depth. The elements should be complementary to the building's design and the design of contiguous weather protection elements on adjoining buildings. Materials and design should engender qualities of permanence and appeal.

#### **Provide Transit Shelters, Waiting Areas, and Seating**

Comfortable waiting areas and seating will encourage walking and transit use. At a minimum, transit oriented district transit stops should provide shelter for pedestrian-convenient passenger loading zones, and secure bike storage. Comfortable waiting areas, appropriate for year-round weather conditions, must be provided at all transit stops. Shelters should be designed with passenger safety and comfort in mind, and be easily recognizable, yet blend with the architecture of the transit station and/or surrounding buildings.

#### **Measures to Add Interest and Attractiveness**

People will more readily choose to walk or bike if they perceive advantages that offset the comfort and convenience of an automobile. Moreover, they will travel greater distances by alternative modes when they are in an interesting



environment. Successful pedestrian environments should include environmentally sensitive, interesting design elements, including public art projects, open space/park amenities, and appropriate small-scale commercial or retail services.

### Avoid Blank Facades

A number of communities have developed provisions to reduce the effects of lengthy, featureless facades and building walls lining pedestrian routes. Various approaches can improve building interest, including requiring street-level display windows and emphasizing building modulation (varying the setback of different sections of the building facade) to add variety. Windows should be provided on the street level rather than blank walls to encourage a visual and economic link between the business and passing pedestrians. A minimum of 60 percent of ground-floor facades facing streets should be constructed of non-reflective, transparent glazing. Methods used to create intervals that reflect and promote compatibility and that respect the scale of the building include:

- Façade modulation (i.e. stepping back or extending forward a portion of the façade);
- Repeating the window patterns at intervals equal to the articulation interval;
- Providing a porch, patio, deck, or covered entry to the articulation interval;
- Providing a balcony or bay window for each interval;
- Changing the roofline by alternating dormers, stepped roofs, gables, or other roof elements to reinforce the modulation or articulation interval; and,
- Long facades should be divided into shorter segments a maximum of 40 feet and preferably 25 feet in width. In larger projects with frontages over 100 feet, modules should be separated by such techniques as a deep notch between the modules or varying architectural elements and/or varying the color of individual modules within a harmonious palette of colors.



Whittier Boulevard, East Los Angeles

### Provide Street Trees, Landscaping, and Open Spaces

Street trees and other forms of landscaping provide a good contrast to buildings and pavement and help soften the urban environment. They enliven streetscapes by blending natural features with built features. Street trees, when planted between sidewalks and streets, buffer pedestrians from vehicles. They also offer summer shade for pedestrians.

The following is a list of recommendations for the planting of street trees throughout the County in order to encourage a more pedestrian friendly environment:

- Street trees should be planted on all street frontages and within all median-planting strips;
- Street trees should be spaced no further than 30 feet on center;
- Street trees should be planted within the public right-of-way or the front yard setback;
- Street trees should be placed a minimum of two feet from the curb;
- At planting, street trees should have a minimum height of six feet and a minimum diameter of two inches measured at four feet above the ground at grade level;
- Street trees should be species approved by a reviewing authority; and,
- Where street trees are not already present at the required spacing interval, shade trees should be planted.

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## VIII. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following are the goals and policies that apply to the countywide transportation networks:

### Goal M-1

An accessible transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods throughout the County.

- **Policy M 1.1:** Expand the availability of transportation options throughout the County.
- **Policy M 1.2:** Encourage a range of transportation services at both the regional and local levels, especially for transit dependent populations.
- **Policy M 1.3:** Sustain an affordable countywide transportation system for all users.
- **Policy M 1.4:** Maintain transportation right-of-way corridors for future transportation uses.
- **Policy M 1.5:** Support the linking of regional and community-level transportation systems.
- **Policy M 1.6:** Create and upgrade pedestrian environments to increase walkability.
- **Policy M 1.7:** Maintain, upgrade, and create new transit facilities.
- **Policy M 1.8:** Ensure the efficient, safe, and environmentally-friendly movement of goods throughout the County.
- **Policy M 1.9:** Maximize aviation system efficiencies for the movement of people and goods.

#### Implementation Action M 1.1

Participate with the Department of Public Works in developing Transit Service Standards that incorporate thresholds for service based on the needs of the community (i.e., density, demographics, etc). See AVTA. Consider adding to our Initial Study checklist.

### Goal M-2

An efficient transportation system that effectively utilizes and expands multimodal transportation options.

- **Policy M 2.1:** Encourage street standards that embrace the complete streets concept, which designs roadways for all users equally including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, people with disabilities, seniors, and users of public transit.
- **Policy M 2.2:** Expand transportation options throughout the County that reduce automobile dependence.
- **Policy M 2.3:** Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and vehicle trips through the use of alternative modes of transportation and various mobility management practices, such as the reduction of parking requirements, employer/institution based transit passes, regional carpooling programs, and telecommuting.
- **Policy M 2.4:** Support smart-growth street design, such as traditional street grid patterns and alleyways.
- **Policy M 2.5:** Expand bicycle infrastructure and amenities throughout the County for both transportation and recreation.
- **Policy M 2.6:** Ensure bike lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian connectivity in all future street improvements.
- **Policy M 2.7:** Reduce parking footprints.
- **Policy M 2.8:** Require a maximum level of connectivity in transportation systems and community-level designs.

#### Implementation Action M 2.1

Establish a task force to study and evaluate the design guidelines and standards for sidewalks, bike lanes and roads in the County.

#### Implementation Action M 2.2

Amend the zoning codes related to parking requirements to establish maximum parking limits.

### Goal M-3

An environmentally sensitive transportation system through the use of innovative programs and technologies.

- **Policy M 3.1:** Encourage the use of emerging technologies in the development of transportation facilities and infrastructure, such as liquid and compressed natural gas and hydrogen gas stations, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and electric car plug-in ports.
- **Policy M 3.2:** Minimize roadway runoff through the use of permeable surface materials such as porous asphalt and concrete materials wherever possible.
- **Policy M 3.3:** Require “green streets” that enhance bio-retention and minimize pollutants conveyed by runoff.
- **Policy M 3.4:** Increase the use of wildlife underpasses and overpasses, fencing, signage, and other measures to minimize vehicular-wildlife collisions.
- **Policy M 3.5:** Require the use of zero, low emission, biodiesel and hybrid vehicles in the County motor pool.

#### *Implementation Action M 3.1*

Develop a standard for green streets in the construction of new roadways and the maintenance of old roadways. Consider a process that allows for a Pilot Project to be completed.

#### *Implementation Action M 3.2*

Using the countywide employee computer-purchasing program as a model, create a similar program that would allow County employees the opportunity to lease a Zero or Low Emission Vehicle at a reasonable price.

### Goal M-4

A transportation system that ensures the safety of all County residents.

- **Policy M 4.1:** Design roads and intersections that protect pedestrians and bicyclists and reduce motor vehicle accidents.

#### *Implementation Action M 4.1*

Develop a traffic calming initiative to increase the safety and use of alternative modes of transportation that targets intersection improvements and residential streets. Change the County code to allow narrower roads and enhanced sidewalks where appropriate.

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## Goal M-5

A financially sustainable countywide transportation system.

- **Policy M 5.1:** Support dedicated funding streams for the maintenance and improvement of County transportation systems.
- **Policy M 5.2:** Encourage the development of innovative financial programs to fund transportation systems, such as congestion pricing.

### *Implementation Action M 5.1*

Continue County participation in regional transportation planning activities and committees, (i.e. Metro Technical Advisory Committee, SCAG RTP development) to ensure County projects are identified and funded.

## Goal M-6

Effective inter-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration in all aspects of transportation planning.

- **Policy M 6.1:** Expand inter-jurisdictional cooperation to ensure a seamless, inter-modal, and multimodal regional transportation system.
- **Policy M 6.2:** Maintain the County Highway Plan.
- **Policy M 6.3:** Support the County Bikeway Plan and continue development of a regional coordinated system of bikeways and bikeway facilities.
- **Policy M 6.4:** Encourage local bikeway proposals and community bike plans.
- **Policy M 6.5:** Support and implement the County Pedestrian Plan.

### *Implementation Action M 6.1*

Develop a TDM Management Ordinance that requires bicycle parking in schools, public buildings, major employment centers, and major commercial districts. This ordinance could also apply to select new developments adjacent to transit centers, major employment centers, and major commercial districts to promote alternatives to the automobile.

### *Implementation Action M 6.2*

Participate in the creation of the County Bicycle Master Plan Update Program with the Department of Public Works.

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# Chapter 5

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# AIR RESOURCES ELEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

Southern California residents consistently rank the region's poor air quality as one of their highest concerns. Despite a wide array of stringent regulatory efforts that have produced some gains in cleaning the air over the last few decades, the South Coast Air Basin, which includes the majority of Los Angeles County, continues to have some of the worst air quality ratings in the nation. Additionally, climate change, caused by global warming greenhouse gases, is now among the most pressing environmental issues facing federal, state, and County officials.

The County recognizes that good air quality is a vital component of a high quality of life for County residents and businesses, and that global warming poses a serious threat to our environment, economy, and public health. This section of the General Plan summarizes the existing conditions related to air quality issues and global warming, and organizes in one place the many goals and policies in the General Plan that will directly improve air quality and decrease greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming in the County.

## II. BACKGROUND

### Regulated Air Pollutants

The air pollutants that are regulated by the Federal and California Clean Air Acts fall under three categories, each of which are monitored and regulated differently:

- Criteria air pollutants;
- Toxic air contaminants (TACs); and,
- Global warming and ozone-depleting gases.

### Criteria Pollutants

In 1970, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identified six “criteria” pollutants they found to be the most harmful to human health and welfare. They are:

- Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>);
- Particulate Matter (PM);
- Carbon Monoxide (CO);
- Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>);
- Sulfur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>); and,
- Lead (Pb).

There are established federal and state air quality standards to protect public health from criteria pollutants. Among the federally identified criteria pollutants, the County levels of ozone, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide continually exceed the National and California Ambient Air Quality Standards. **Table 5.1** is a summary of the primary sources and effects of the federally identified criteria pollutants.

### Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs)

There are hundreds of TACs, such as formaldehyde and methanol, which do not currently have federal or state ambient air quality standards. However, exposure to TACs is associated with elevated risk of cancer, birth defects, genetic damage, and other adverse health effects.

TACs are regulated through technology-based requirements that are implemented by state and local agencies. In California, TACs are regulated through the Air Toxics Program and the Air Toxics “Hot Spots” Information and Assessment Act. In the Los Angeles County region, operators of specific facilities must submit comprehensive emission inventories, which are used to further categorize each facility as high, intermediate, and low-priority based on the potency, toxicity, quantity, and volume of their emissions.

**Table 5.1: Primary Sources and Effects of Criteria Pollutants**

Pollutants	Source	LA County Classification	Primary Health Effects
<b>Ozone (O3)</b>	Atmospheric reaction of organic gases with nitrogen oxides in sunlight ("smog")	Extreme non-attainment area	Aggravation of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases; Reduced lung function; Increased cough and chest discomfort
<b>Fine Particulate Matter (PM10 and PM 2.5)</b>	Stationary combustion of fuels; construction activities; industrial processes, atmospheric chemical reactions	Serious non-attainment area	Reduced lung function; Aggravation of respiratory and cardio-respiratory diseases; Increased mortality rate; Reduced lung function growth in children.
<b>Carbon Monoxide (CO)</b>	Incomplete combustion of fuels, such as motor vehicle exhaust	Serious non-attainment area	Aggravation of some heart disease.
<b>Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2)</b>	Motor vehicle exhaust; high-temperature stationary combustion; atmospheric reactions	*Concentrations have not exceeded national standards since 1991, but emissions remain a concern because of their contribution to O3 and PM	Aggravation of respiratory illness.
<b>Sulfur Dioxide (SO2)</b>	Combustion of sulfur containing fossil fuels; smelting of sulfur-bearing metal ores; industrial processes	Attainment area	Aggravation of respiratory diseases (asthma, emphysema); Reduced lung function.
<b>Lead (Pb)</b>	Contaminated soil	Attainment area	Behavioral and hearing disabilities in children; Nervous system impairment.

Source: South Coast Air Quality Management District, 2005.

If the risks are above specific levels, facilities are required to notify surrounding populations and to develop and implement a risk reduction plan.

#### **Global Warming and Ozone-Depleting Gases:**

- **Greenhouse Gases:** Some gases in the atmosphere affect the Earth's heat balance by absorbing infrared radiation. This layer of gases prevents the escape of heat, similar to the function of a greenhouse. Gases that are identified as contributing to the "greenhouse" effect and are responsible for global warming are regulated through California's AB 32, which is covered in detail later in this chapter; and,
- **Ozone-depleting Gases:** Ozone-depleting gases contribute to the destruction of the Earth's naturally occurring ozone, which protects our planet from the damaging effects of solar ultraviolet radiation. The biggest contributors to ozone depletion are chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), halons, carbon tetrachloride, methyl chloroform, and other halogenated compounds.

The negative effects of poor air quality have both economic and social outcomes. In addition to physical side effects, the economic impacts of poor air quality cause increased absences from work and school, productivity impacts, such as damage to agricultural production, and social impacts, such as the depletion of our scenic resources and natural environments. Effective regulation of air pollution, through innovative land use strategies and collaboration with air quality agencies, is a primary goal of the County's General Plan.

### **III. AIR QUALITY REGULATING AGENCIES**

The Federal Clean Air Act (CAA) of 1977 was a major policy milestone for the current federal and state systems that regulate air pollution. The following discussion summarizes the air quality agencies that play a role in regulating air pollution in Los Angeles County.

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US-EPA)

The US-EPA establishes national ambient air quality standards, enforces the federal Clean Air Act, and regulates emission sources under the exclusive authority of the federal government. These sources include automobiles, aircraft, certain ships, and locomotives. Information on the programs and activities in US-EPA Region IX, which includes California, can be found at [www.epa.gov/region9](http://www.epa.gov/region9).

### California Air Resources Board (CARB)

CARB was created as part of the California Environmental Protection Agency in 1991. CARB is responsible for the implementation of the California Clean Air Act, establishing state ambient air quality standards, and overseeing several programs related to emission reduction activities. More information on CARB programs and activities can be found at [www.arb.ca.gov](http://www.arb.ca.gov).

### South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) & the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District (AVAQMD)

Created in response to the region's poor air quality, the SCAQMD and the AVAQMD are responsible for monitoring air quality as well as planning, implementing, and enforcing programs designed to attain and maintain state and federal ambient air quality standards in the region. The SCAQMD implements a wide range of programs and regulations that address point source pollution and mobile source emissions, and enforces air quality through inspections, fines, and

“ Make not little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency.

—*Daniel H. Burnham*

educational training. Both SCAQMD and AVAQMD have programs to reduce mobile source emissions by providing grants to local governments, construction companies, and school bus providers to buy or retrofit engines to meet low or zero emission vehicle standards.

The SCAQMD jurisdiction is approximately 10,743 square miles and includes all of Los Angeles County except for the Antelope Valley, which is now covered by the Antelope AVAQMD. Until 1997 the SCAQMD was responsible for air pollution control in all of Los Angeles County. However, in 1997 a special Antelope Valley district was created under the SCAQMD with greater local autonomy for air pollution control. By 2002 this district changed its designation to the Antelope Valley Air Quality Management District.



The Ports Are Major Air Polluter

The SCAQMD jurisdiction is divided into sub-regions, or basins. The majority of Los Angeles County is in the South Coast Air Basin, while the area north of the San Gabriel Mountains is in the Mojave Desert Air Basin (**Figure 5.1**). The SCAQMD and the AVAQMD are the regulatory agencies in the two County air basins that are tasked with creating regulations, programs, and policies to reduce air pollution in Los Angeles County.

Governed by twelve (12) Board members, one (1) of which is a member of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the SCAQMD adopts policies and regulations that promote



clean air. A member of the County's Board of Supervisors is also on the AVAQMD seven-member Governing Board. The separation of the two districts reflects the geographic, climatological, and demographic differences of the highly urbanized Los Angeles basin and the less urbanized high desert of north-eastern Los Angeles County.

## IV. GLOBAL WARMING

There is wide scientific agreement that human actions and development patterns are contributing to the warming of the Earth's temperatures. The County recognizes the importance of addressing global warming through the goals and policies of its General Plan. The following discussion summarizes the legal setting related to planning for global warming, and is followed by the goals, policies, and implementation actions in the General Plan the County employs to address greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

### Assembly Bill (AB) 32: California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006

AB 32 is a landmark law that aims to control and reduce the emission of global warming gases in California. An overwhelming majority of scientists from around the world have universally predicted that global warming will have a number of adverse impacts on the State's ecosystems and economy. Varying scenarios call for a range of climatic changes that could produce intense flooding or prolonged droughts, higher temperatures that can cause wildfires, or rising sea levels that will affect low-lying coastal areas.

In California, there are a number of gases, such as methane, nitrous oxide, and hydrofluorocarbons that are contributing to the greenhouse effect, which refers to both naturally occurring greenhouse gases, and also gases emitted as a result of human activities. However, the largest greenhouse gas contributor is carbon dioxide, and in California, more than half of the fossil fuel emissions of carbon dioxide are related to transportation uses. As the County has some of the highest rates of single-occupant automobile use, traf-

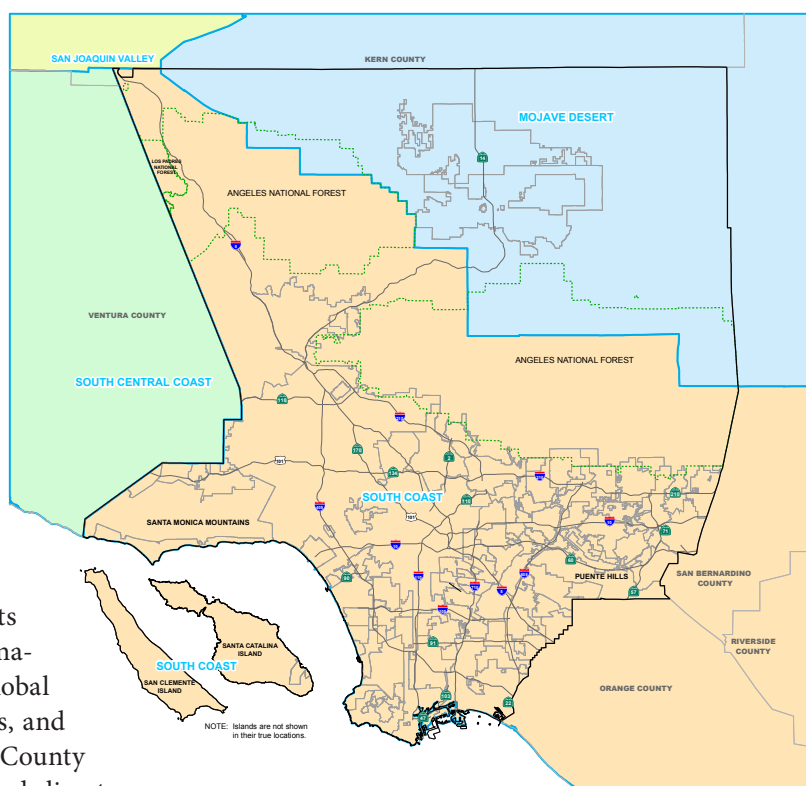


Figure 5.1: L.A. County Air Basins

fic congestion, and Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) in the nation, the County is a significant contributor to global warming.

AB 32 requires that the California State Air Resources Board (CARB) establish a comprehensive program of regulatory and market mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020. The County, its cities, and businesses within the County borders will all have to comply with the AB 32 program as developed by CARB.

## V. PLANNING ISSUES RELATED TO AIR QUALITY AND GLOBAL WARMING

In anticipation of future regulatory measures, the General Plan implements many policies related to greenhouse gas emissions and global warming, as seen in the goals and policies section below. In addition, the County understands that global warming is not just about mitigation, but also adaptation. The County has already initiated several programs specifically designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and is currently formulating a countywide Greenhouse

Gasses Emissions Reduction Plan. As these programs are further developed, the County will continue to participate in providing both regulatory and market strategies to meet the objectives established in the AB 32 law.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Plan

Los Angeles County will draft a Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan in preparation of the County fulfilling the objectives outlined in California State law AB 32. To achieve this mandate, the County is currently working to determine the quantity of its greenhouse gas emissions and identify which sectors are responsible for the majority of these targeted emissions.

A comprehensive list of policies and action programs to conserve resources and abate global warming are being compiled. An important final step, to be determined with the help of State and local officials, will be to calculate the quantifiable savings from our policies and action plans. For now, however, the County, through its General Plan update, will implement a multitude of enforceable policies related to land use, energy conservation, and transportation that will work toward reducing the County's greenhouse gas emissions. The following section outlines each General

Plan element, and discusses the important policy issues related to the County's greenhouse gas emission reduction activities.

### Land Use Element

The way the County organizes its land use is one of the most significant actions it can take to improve the region's air quality and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by minimizing VMTs and vehicle trips (see **Figure 5.2**). The Los Angeles County General Plan stresses the value of an efficient use of land that provides for a more a healthy, livable, walkable, and sustainable community. The Land Use Element's Three-Point Strategic Land Use Policy contains several strategies devoted to this end, such as the promotion of mixed-use developments along the County's major public transit routes, the identification of several transit-oriented districts (TODs) that promote housing and services near transportation hubs, and the preservation of our remaining open spaces and natural resources.

The General Plan Land Use Element introduces three very important programmatic actions the County is taking to address greenhouse gases and energy conservation, all of which are summarized in detail under the listing of current County programs below. The first is an ordinance requiring

**Sources of Potential Greenhouse Gas Reductions (Million Metric Tons CO<sub>2</sub> Equivalent)**

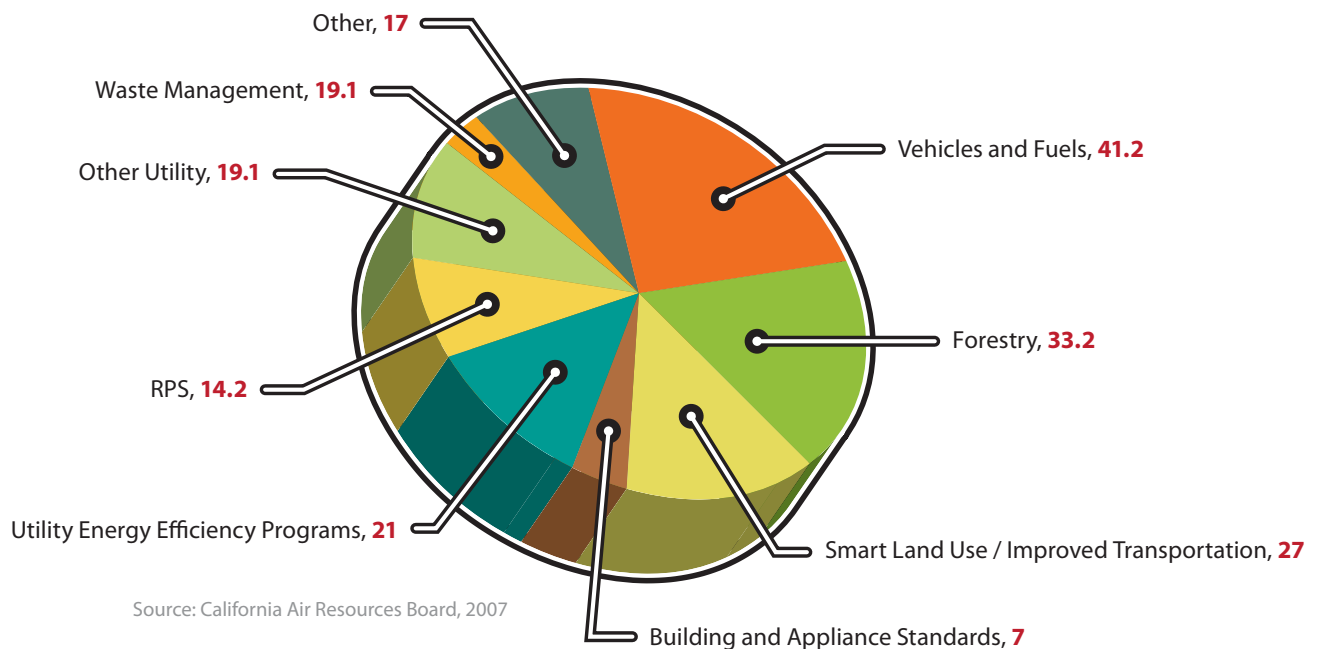


Figure 5.2: Sources of Potential Greenhouse Gas Reductions

“green-building” standards in all new development, as well as major renovations and additions; the second is an ordinance for the implementation of Low Impact Development (LID) Best Management Practices (BMPs); and the third, an ordinance outlining drought-tolerant landscaping requirements.

In short, the Land Use Element is the primary tool for the implementation of an efficient, smart growth-focused land use configuration for the County’s unincorporated areas. The ultimate objective of all of our land use policies is to limit the amount of sprawl and negative human impacts that development places on our landscape, air, and public health. The goals and policies of the General Plan provide an enforceable set of policy direction to achieve these objectives.

### Mobility Element

There is a direct link between the County’s transportation activities and air pollution. According to SCAQMD, mobile sources of pollution, such as cars, trucks, buses, construction equipment, trains, ships and airplanes, account for 60 percent of all smog producing emissions in the region.



Congestion Pollutes the Air

#### Development Policies That Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions:

- Implement land use strategies to encourage jobs/housing proximity, promote transit-oriented development, and encourage high density development along transit corridors. Encourage compact, mixed-use projects, forming urban villages designed to maximize affordable housing and encourage walking, bicycling and the use of public transit systems.
- Encourage infill, redevelopment, and higher density development, whether in incorporated or unincorporated settings.
- Encourage new development to integrate housing, civic and retail amenities (jobs, schools, parks, shopping opportunities) to help reduce VMT resulting from discretionary automobile trips.

-Governor’s Office of Planning and Research  
*CEQA and Climate Change Technical Advisory, June 18, 2008*

Additionally, the County’s highly congested freeways and highways further contribute to the conditions that produce air pollution.

Despite the fact that Los Angeles County has markedly improved its air quality over previous decades, the region still has the nation’s poorest air quality. More importantly, the continued population and economic growth that is projected for the County could overwhelm these air quality gains unless careful attention is paid to voluntary and regulatory measures that reduce transportation-related emissions.

The General Plan provides a wide array of policies that address strategies for improving air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the County. Many strategies are transportation-based, such as improving the efficiency of the County roadway network, and implementing mobility management opportunities such as increased ridesharing and vanpools. Many other policies, however, are based on creative land use strategies that require less automotive travel. These include promoting mixed use and transit-oriented development (TOD), which encourages infill development over suburban sprawl and provides opportunities for increased transit use. Developer incentives to increase density in both existing and newly subdivided areas encourage more pedestrian activity and less reliance on automobiles, particularly if employment opportunities and services are nearby. Finally, the County is promoting new design standards for streets and sidewalks in order to



encourage healthier, safer, more attractive environments for walking and biking, further reducing the need to use automobiles.

### Conservation and Open Space Element

The Conservation and Open Space Element provides policy direction for a multitude of the County's most important natural resources, all of which work toward the goal of preserving our resources, conserving energy, and reducing the human impact on the environment. Many of the goals and policies of the Conservation and Open Space Element recognize the same tenet of the Land Use Element - that the way the County organizes its land is extremely important in fighting air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

The General Plan provides specific guidance on how to preserve the County's remaining open spaces. This element also details the County's Significant Ecological Areas and

Hillside Management programs, which allow the County to preserve its biotic resources and hillsides through land use regulation. Further policy guidance promotes locally grown, sustainable and organic farming practices, and also seeks to increase the use of renewable energy resources, such as wind and solar power, both commercially and on-site.

The General Plan strives to provide more than just broad policy guidance and as such, many policies and action programs are immediately enforceable and will be easily implemented upon adoption.

### Public Services and Facilities Element

The Public Services and Facilities Element is a collaborative effort with the County agencies and departments that provide the primary services for County residents and businesses, such as law enforcement, fire, and libraries. This collaborative effort has resulted in the adoption of the General Plan's goal for sustainable practices and development by multiple County service providers. As such, the General Plan has a far-reaching effect for promoting practices that will improve our air quality, reduce greenhouse gases, and improve our environment.

Important contributors to the Public Services and Facilities Element include the Department of Public Works and Sanitation Districts, who effectively manage the County's water and sewer infrastructure. The General Plan provides clear policy guidance to reduce the impacts on our groundwater through Low Impact Development (LID) practices and LEED greenbuilding techniques. Additionally, the General Plan provides policy direction for the management of the County's significant waste reduction programs and practices.

The General Plan provides a means for a variety of collaborative projects and policies that will be important in the County's abatement of air pollution and reduction in greenhouse gases as required by AB 32. The County is already taking steps to increase water and energy efficiency and reduce its impacts on climate change. The following sections outline the current and proposed programs that the County employs to directly address air pollution and greenhouse gas reduction, followed by the goals and policies from the General Plan that work together with these programs to positively affect climate change.



Bicycle Infrastructure is Needed to Lower Air Pollution

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Many Schools and Playgrounds in the County are Adjacent to Major Air Polluters

## VI. CURRENT AND PROPOSED COUNTY PROGRAMS

The two sources that organize and contain the majority of policy information and implementation measures to increase energy efficiency, improve air quality, and address global warming can be found in the Los Angeles County General Plan and the County Code.

### The General Plan

The presiding theme of the Los Angeles County General Plan is sustainability. The General Plan provides the framework for how the County will grow and develop over the next 20 years, and it positions Los Angeles County to be a leader in sustainable development and environmental stewardship. The list at the end of this section compiles in one place the General Plan's goals and policies related to improving air quality, combating global warming, and improving the conditions of the County's environment.

### County Code

There are several building and development standards within the County Code that address air quality, energy efficiency, and environmental conservation. The Code outlines several land use management strategies, such as transit-oriented development and clustered development that implement efficient land use policy to reduce environmental impacts and automobile use. Other standards include open space

requirements in new developments, the hillside management ordinance, minimum requirements for parking lot landscaping, and required tree canopies for new development. Further adaptations in the County Code to improve energy efficiency and lessen environmental impacts will be ongoing through the Department of Regional Planning's (DRP) Zoning Ordinance Update Program (ZOUP).

The programs and implementation measures outlined in the General Plan and implemented through the County Code and other endeavors are divided into three (3) programs that are detailed below:

1. Energy and Water Efficiency Program;
2. Environmental Stewardship Program; and,
3. Public Education and Outreach Program.

### Energy and Water Efficiency Program

This program seeks to further reduce the energy and water consumption of County facilities through the establishment of specific reduction targets. Initiatives contained under the Energy and Water Efficiency Program include:

#### Internal Services Department (ISD)

##### Energy Management Program

Ongoing ISD projects that have been implemented have resulted in over \$100 million in cumulative energy savings to the County. Most of these savings have been achieved through the retrofitting or replacement of building lighting



Automobile With Biofuel Engine Conversion



An Immense Amount of Energy is Needed to Convey Water Through the California Aqueduct

systems and air conditioning equipment. On an annual basis, these savings currently offset approximately 10% of the total ISD Utilities Budget, or the equivalency of 1,370 million pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, 12,000 cars taken off the road, or 20,000 acres of trees planted.

#### **ISD Facility Retrofitting Program**

Initiated in 2004, this program “tunes up” County heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment. There are approximately 500 County buildings that are identified for the program and that will receive retrofitting upgrades. Other energy technologies that ISD is investigating to implement in this program where appropriate include thermal storage, distributed generation, and widespread implementation of ISD’s online, real-time energy monitoring tool (EEMIS).

#### **County Purchasing Policy (P-1050)**

Under P-1050, ISD’s Purchasing Division will determine appropriate standards for green purchasing and will develop a 5-year plan to phase-in categories of certified goods. Easy to adopt purchasing categories, such as paper and cleaning supplies, will be implemented immediately. Central purchasing agreements with a catalog of environmentally friendly and energy efficient products will be established.

#### **Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMP)**

There is currently one IRWMP in the planning process (Upper Santa Clara), and two (2) recently completed IRWMPs (Antelope Valley in 2007 and the Greater Los Angeles County Region in 2006), within Los Angeles County. These IRWMP plans are charged with developing strategies to secure a safe and reliable supply of water for the County. Within the plans are various project lists, of which many apply directly to the reduction of greenhouse gases. Global warming is projected to worsen the intensity of droughts and increase drought occurrence. The implementation of these plans will address water efficiency, conservation, and recycling as well as the protection of ground and surface water and the development of new supplies.

#### **Recycled Water Task Force**

In 2006, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors directed the Department of Public Works (DPW) to convene a Task Force to make recommendations for the expanded use of recycled water for nonpotable purposes in the County. The County recognizes that increasing the use of recycled water would significantly lessen the County’s dependency and the environmental impacts of imported water sources.

#### **Green Building Ordinance**

Pertains to the requirement of third party certification of new buildings and large renovations of all appropriate industrial, commercial, and residential development. In

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addition, the development of basic County specific standards will ensure the program meets the goals of water and energy efficient design and development. The purpose of Green Building Ordinance (to be adopted) is to establish green building techniques into the construction of new private residential and non-residential buildings to achieve the following goals:

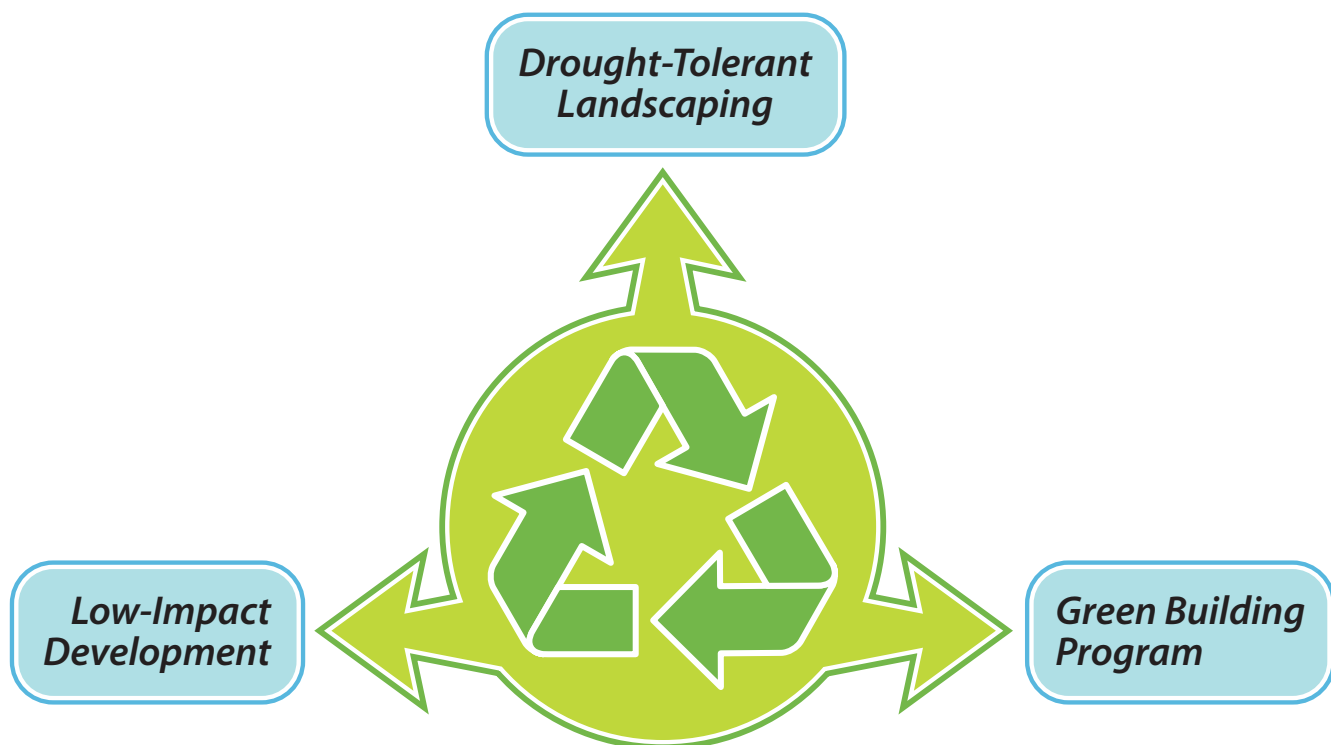
- To increase water efficiency and lower water usage;
- To increase energy efficiency and lower energy usage;
- To encourage the conservation of natural resources;
- To reduce waste in landfills generated by the demolition of buildings and construction projects;
- To minimize impacts to existing infrastructure; and,
- To promote a healthier indoor environment.

#### **Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance**

The Low Impact Development (LID) Ordinance (to be adopted) applies to all new parking lots, nonresidential projects, municipal projects, mixed use projects, multi-family residential projects of 5 or more units, and residential subdivisions of 5 or more units, with simplified LID

requirements applicable to residential developments with less than 5 units. The purpose of the Low-Impact Development Ordinance is to require the use of LID principles in development projects. LID encourages site sustainability and smart growth in a manner that respects and preserves the characteristics of the County's watersheds, drainage paths, water supplies, and natural resources. LID builds on conventional design strategies by exploiting every surface in the development, softscape and hardscape, to perform a beneficial hydrologic function. The surfaces are used to retain, detain, store, change the timing of, or filter runoff in a number of different configurations and combinations. The objectives of the County's LID Ordinance are to:

- Mimic undeveloped stormwater and urban runoff rates and volumes in any storm event up to and including the 50 year capital design storm event;
- Prevent pollutants of concern from leaving the site in stormwater as the result of storms up to and including the water quality design storm event; and,
- Minimize hydromodification impacts to a natural drainage system.



**Table 5.2: Green Building Requirements for New Private Residential and Non-Residential Buildings**

Title 22 Zoning Requirement		Phase 1	Phase 2
1	New residential buildings including single-family dwellings < 5 units, two-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings < 5 units	County of L.A. Green Building Standards	County of L.A. Green Building Standards
2	New residential buildings including single-family dwellings > 5 units, two-family dwellings and multi-family dwellings > 5 units	County of L.A. Green Building Standards	Green Point Rated or California Green Builder
3	New hotels or nonresidential or mixed use buildings < 10,000 square feet of gross floor area	County of L.A. Green Building Standards	County of L.A. Green Building Standards
4	New hotels or nonresidential or mixed use buildings > 10,000 square feet and < 25,000 square feet of gross floor area	County of L.A. Green Building Standards	LEED – Certified
5	New hotels or nonresidential or mixed use buildings > 25,000 square feet of gross floor area	LEED - Silver	LEED – Silver
6	First time tenant improvements > 25,000 square feet	County of L.A. Green Building Standards	LEED – Certified
7	New high-rise buildings > 75 feet in height	LEED - Silver	LEED – Silver

### Drought Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance

The purpose of the Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance (to be adopted) is to establish minimum standards for the design and installation of landscaping using drought-tolerant plants and native plants that require minimum water and ensure that the County will continue to realize the benefits of landscaping that is appropriate to the particular project and region's climate. The Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance applies to on-site landscaping for all new construction. The landscaping development standards under the Drought-Tolerant Landscaping Ordinance are as follows:

- A minimum of 75% of any landscaped area shall be plants as specified within the Drought-Tolerant Approved Plant List;
- Turf shall not exceed 25% of landscaped area; and,
- Plants shall be grouped in hydrozones in accordance with their respective water, cultural (soil, climate, sun and light) and maintenance needs.

### The Green Grant Program

Provides money to upgrade your home with energy saving tools, such as tankless water heaters, solar panels, insulation, and attic fans. The program is targeted to low-income homeowners in unincorporated County areas and is funded by Community Development Block Grants (CDBG).

### Environmental Stewardship Program

The program's purpose is to reduce the County's "environmental footprint" including the amount of greenhouse gases produced through direct and indirect County operations. Initiatives contained under the Environmental Stewardship Program include:

#### California Climate Action Registry

The County has joined the Registry in order to utilize their reporting protocol for developing an assessment of the County's total greenhouse gases emissions responsibility.

#### County "Clean Fuels" Policy

Since 1995, the Board of Supervisors has directed all County departments to report on the composition of their fleet and their progress toward acquiring clean fuel vehicles.

#### Parks Master Plan

The Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is currently developing a parks master plan. This plan concentrates on inventorying existing County parks and identifying opportunities for the expansion of the County's park system.

#### Departmental Recycling

The Energy and Environmental Policy team is working to enhance the County Departmental recycling Program which is led by the Public Works' Environmental Programs

The following information on alternative commuter choices can be found at the County's CEO website at <http://ceo.lacounty.gov/wpp/rideshare.htm>. For additional rideshare information or assistance contact the Chief Executive Office, Workplace Programs at (213) 974-1182.

**Public Transportation:** Employees are encouraged to take public transit at least one day a week. Call 1-800-COMMUTE or <http://www.socalcommute.org>

**Metrolink Services:** For information on commuter rail service lines call 1-800 371-LINK or <http://www.metrolinktrains.com>

**Carpooling:** Employees are encouraged to rideshare to work at least one day a week. For ridematch service, call 1-800-COMMUTE or <http://www.ridematch.info>

**Vanpooling:** Employees are encouraged to form "independent" vanpools with co-workers or near-by employees. Contact VPSI at 1-800 826-7433 or website <http://www.vanpoolusa.com>

**Rideguides and Rideshare Matching:** For "personalized" information on potential rideshare partners, public transit services in your area, park-and-ride lots and vanpools, call 1-800-COMMUTE or <http://www.ridematch.info>

## Rideshare

The County of Los Angeles Air Quality-Rideshare Program, mandated by County Ordinance 90-0033U, complies with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 2202 Employee Commute Program and the federal Clean Air Act. Our mission is to promote ridesharing and telework as a workplace strategy that reduces traffic congestion, air pollution, and commuter costs. The Chief Executive Office (CEO) sets program policy and coordinates implementation of uniform procedures, through a Countywide Coordinator Network. The County Labor-Management Advisory Committee has oversight responsibility for Civic Center Rideshare strategies and achievement of regional air quality/rideshare goals.

## Environmental Fairs

Coordinated by the Energy and Environmental Policy Team, there will be a series of energy and environmental fairs, which will provide County employees and the public with opportunities to learn about energy efficient and sustainable products and practices for home and work.

Division. This program placed a priority on implementing recycling bins in visible areas for the segregation of paper, plastic, glass, and other recyclables from normal waste.

## Policies for Livable, Active Communities and Environments (PLACE) Program

The Department of Public Health's (DPH) PLACE program addresses the influences of land use and community design on physical health. This program is open to cities, non-profits, school, and for-profit organization that seek to promote changes to the built environment, such as streets, parks, and alternate modes of transportation, that promote physical activity in the everyday lives of County residents.

## Public Education and Outreach Program

This program utilizes the County's communication and outreach channels to facilitate energy conservation practices and assistance programs. Initiatives contained under the Environmental Stewardship Program include:



County Motor Pool Vehicle, Toyota Prius Hybrid





Haze Over Downtown Los Angeles

### Regional Outreach

The Energy and Environmental Policy team conducts workshops on doing “green” business with the County. The first workshop was held in March 2007 in El Segundo with the Office of Small Business.

### Local Government Collaboration

The County, through ISD, has joined the Local Government Commission Sustainable Energy Coalition (LGSEC). The LGSEC is a membership of local governments who have committed to tracking and participating in energy activities jointly in order to conserve expenses and speak with a stronger, unified voice.

## VII. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The goals and policies which apply to air resources and global warming are:

### Goal AR-1

A County that exceeds State air quality standards and reduces global warming greenhouse gas emissions.

- **Policy AR 1.1:** Support efforts to reduce the effects of Global Warming through the participation in AB 32 (2006) programs that reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the County.
- **Policy AR 1.2:** Work with scientists and other experts to understand the County’s ecological footprint and to understand global warming’s effect on the County.
- **Policy AR 1.3:** Require the use of zero, low emission, biodiesel and hybrid vehicles in the County motor pool.
- **Policy AR 1.4:** Continue inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional participation in global warming reduction activities.

### Implementation Action AR 1.1

Join the United States Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, a pact amongst local governments that seeks to act against global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions to below 1990 levels.

### Implementation Action AR 1.2

Begin creating the County’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan.

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## Goal AR-2

Efficient and progressive smart growth land use policies that address the diverse needs of all County residents.

- **Policy AR 2.1:** Encourage urban infill development on vacant, underutilized sites, and brownfield areas.
- **Policy AR 2.2:** Promote and develop transit oriented districts along major transit corridors.
- **Policy AR 2.3:** Encourage mixed use development to facilitate the proximity and linkage between housing and employment throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 2.4:** Promote land use practices that encourage housing to be developed in proximity to employment opportunities.
- **Policy AR 2.5:** Encourage compact development and increased residential density in appropriately designated areas.
- **Policy AR 2.6:** Support creative housing development that provides mixed-income, affordable, and rental housing in various housing types and densities.
- **Policy AR 2.7:** Ensure that all community plans, zoning, and subsequent development meet all Federal and State fair housing laws and regulations.
- **Policy AR 2.8:** Ensure universal accessibility in all planning endeavors to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- **Policy AR 2.9:** Protect rural communities by utilizing natural landforms to create buffers from urban and suburban development.

### Implementation Action AR 2.1

Apply for a SCAG 2% Compass Technical Assistance Grant for a demonstration project that targets Smart Growth initiatives in the County, such as an existing Transit Oriented District (TOD).

### Implementation Action AR 2.2

Create individual and unique mixed use zoning overlays for all areas indicated as potential Mixed Use overlays on the Land Use Policy maps.

### Implementation Action AR 2.3

Create an infill development ordinance that focuses development on vacant and underutilized parcels. This ordinance should expedite permitting and provide incentives for development in these urban areas.

### Implementation Action AR 2.4

Amend existing TOD District boundaries, and study possibilities for new TOD districts throughout the unincorporated County along light rail lines and major bus routes.

### Goal AR-3

Sustainable communities that conserve resources, protect the environment, and improve public health.

- **Policy AR 3.1:** Promote or require “green building” principles, LEED certification, and Low Impact Development (LID) in all development activities.
- **Policy AR 3.2:** Encourage land use practices that minimize sprawl.
- **Policy AR 3.3:** Promote land use practices that enhance public health.
- **Policy AR 3.4:** Promote efficient community water and energy practices.
- **Policy AR 3.5:** Preserve and expand green spaces throughout the County to encourage healthy lifestyles.
- **Policy AR 3.6:** Require development to optimize the solar orientation of buildings to maximize passive and active solar design techniques.
- **Policy AR 3.7:** Support land use policy that promotes environmental justice.
- **Policy AR 3.8:** Promote sustainable subdivisions that meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – Neighborhood Development standards.
- **Policy AR 3.9:** Promote compact, walkable, well-designed development.

#### *Implementation Action AR 3.1*

Develop a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program where identified rural and open space areas under development pressure can sell their development credits to established receiving areas. Develop an accompanying map of target open space areas for the TDR program.

#### *Implementation Action AR 3.2*

Identify greenbelts and natural buffers around rural County communities.

#### *Implementation Action AR 3.3*

Develop a Competitive Grant Program that will provide partial funding for the retrofitting of homes and/or businesses for landscape water efficiency projects to replace traditional lawns.

#### *Implementation Action AR 3.4*

Develop a Competitive Grant Program to fund green building projects to upgrade existing buildings to meet LEED certified or comparable standards.

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## Goal AR-4

An accessible transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods throughout the County.

- **Policy AR 4.1:** Expand the availability of transportation options throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 4.2:** Encourage a range of transportation services at both the regional and local levels, especially for transit dependent populations.
- **Policy AR 4.3:** Sustain an affordable countywide transportation system for all users.
- **Policy AR 4.4:** Support the linking of regional and community-level transportation systems.
- **Policy AR 4.5:** Create and upgrade pedestrian environments to increase walkability.
- **Policy AR 4.6:** Maintain, upgrade, and create new transit facilities.
- **Policy AR 4.7:** Ensure the efficient, safe, and environmentally-friendly movement of goods throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 4.8:** Maximize aviation system efficiencies for the movement of people and goods.

## Goal AR-5

An efficient transportation system that effectively utilizes and expands multimodal transportation options.

- **Policy AR 5.1:** Encourage street standards that embrace the complete streets concept, which designs roadways for all users equally including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, people with disabilities, seniors, and users of public transit.
- **Policy AR 5.2:** Expand transportation options throughout the County that reduce automobile dependence.
- **Policy AR 5.3:** Reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and vehicle trips through the use of alternative modes of transportation and various mobility management practices, such as the reduction of parking requirements, employer/institution based transit passes, regional carpooling programs, and telecommuting.
- **Policy AR 5.4:** Support smart-growth street design, such as traditional street grid patterns and alleyways.
- **Policy AR 5.5:** Expand bicycle infrastructure and amenities throughout the County for both transportation and recreation.
- **Policy AR 5.6:** Ensure bike lanes, bike paths, and pedestrian connectivity in all future street improvements.
- **Policy AR 5.7:** Require a maximum level of connectivity in transportation systems and community-level designs.

### *Implementation Action AR 2.1*

Establish a task force to study and evaluate the design guidelines and standards for sidewalks, bike lanes and roads in the County.

**Goal AR-6**

An environmentally sensitive transportation system through the use of innovative programs and technologies.

- **Policy AR 6.1:** Encourage the use of emerging technologies in the development of transportation facilities and infrastructure, such as liquid and compressed natural gas and hydrogen gas stations, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and electric care plug-in ports.
- **Policy AR 6.2:** Minimize roadway runoff through the use of permeable surface materials such as porous asphalt and concrete materials wherever possible.
- **Policy AR 6.3:** Require “green streets” that enhance bio-retention and minimize pollutants conveyed by runoff.
- **Policy AR 6.4:** Require the use of zero, low emission, biodiesel and hybrid vehicles in the County motor pool.

**Implementation Action AR 6.1**

Develop a standard for green streets in the construction of new roadways and the maintenance of old roadways. Consider a process that allows for a Pilot Project to be completed.

**Implementation Action AR 6.2**

Using the countywide employee computer-purchasing program as a model, create a similar program that would allow County employees the opportunity to lease a Zero or Low Emission Vehicle at a reasonable price.

**Goal AR-7**

A wide range of County open space areas.

- **Policy AR 7.1:** Promote the preservation of open space areas throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 7.2:** Support the acquisition of new open space areas throughout the County.

**Implementation Action AR 7.1**

Coordinate with Local, State, and Federal park agencies and conservancies to acquire open space for recreation and biotic preservation throughout the County.

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## Goal AR-8

A balanced and interconnected network of passive and active local parks, community parks, regional recreation areas, multi-purpose trail systems, beaches, and harbors.

- **Policy AR 8.1:** Develop and expand regional and local parkland and trail systems in the County.
- **Policy AR 8.2:** Require new development to dedicate and improve parkland, as allowed by the Quimby Act. School grounds cannot be calculated as new park acreage.
- **Policy AR 8.3:** Direct resources to communities that are underserved by local parks.
- **Policy AR 8.4:** Expand multi-purpose trail networks for all users.
- **Policy AR 8.5:** Improve current parks and trail systems with needed amenities.
- **Policy AR 8.6:** Design parks and trails for optimal safety, security and sustainability.

### *Implementation Action AR 8.1*

Update Hillside Management CUP to modify open space requirements.

### *Implementation Action AR 8.2*

Develop a Parks Master Plan for Los Angeles County. This plan will integrate countywide park planning goals into a single, coherent parks and recreation plan, sharing inter-jurisdictional responsibility for the provision of new parkland, continued maintenance, and joint-use agreements.

## Goal AR-9

Significant ecological systems, biotic communities, and imperiled species preserved in perpetuity.

- **Policy AR 9.1:** Require applicants to consult with County staff early in the development process for assistance in project designs that maximize natural features and preserve biological resources.
- **Policy AR 9.2:** Maintain and monitor the program and network of Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs), and other programs to conserve habitat, wetlands, and wildlife corridors in the County.
- **Policy AR 9.3:** Participate in inter-jurisdictional collaborative strategies that protect biological resources.
- **Policy AR 9.4:** Maximize the ecological function of the County's diverse natural habitats, such as Coastal sage scrub, perennial grasslands, Joshua trees, California walnut, Western Sycamore, and native Oak woodlands.
- **Policy AR 9.5:** Support the restoration and preservation of degraded streams, rivers, wetlands and other areas with significant biological resources.
- **Policy AR 9.6:** Maintain and monitor the Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) and other programs to conserve special-status species, their associated habitat and wildlife movement corridors.
- **Policy AR 9.7:** Require that development within an SEA be designed to:
  - Preserve sensitive ecological resources;
  - Maintain sufficient natural vegetative cover and open spaces to buffer sensitive resource areas;
  - Maintain water bodies and watercourses in a substantially natural state;
  - Preserve wildlife movement corridors;
  - Site roads and utilities to avoid sensitive habitat areas or migratory paths;
  - Control light pollution;
  - Reduce erosion;
  - Limit noise producing uses; and,
  - Provide open or permeable fencing.



- **Policy AR 9.8:** Require that development mitigate ‘in-kind’ any significant effects on biologically sensitive areas and wetlands.
- **Policy AR 9.9:** Maintain watercourses and wetlands in a natural state, unaltered by grading, fill, or diversion activities.
- **Policy AR 9.10:** Support innovative agricultural practices that conserve resources and promote sustainability, such as drip irrigation, hydroponics and organic farming.
- **Policy AR 9.11:** Cultivate and expand farmer’s markets throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 9.12:** Encourage a countywide community garden and urban farming program.

#### **Implementation Action AR 9.1**

Initiate a County tree planting program with a goal of planting one tree for every resident in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Drought resistant and native trees should be strategically planted in designated locations as part of neighborhood beautification programs, along commercial corridors, and in school yards.

#### **Implementation Action AR 9.2**

Create a formal Mitigation Land Banking Program with appropriate criteria for a project’s eligibility that will allow the purchase of land within Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) as a mitigation measure for development in areas outside of SEAs. These purchases should be strategically targeted in SEAs that are threatened by development activity along the urban fringe and within existing urban areas. Optimal mitigation would be “in-kind” with regard to species or habitat. The optimal realization radius for “in-kind” mitigation is two (2) miles, when feasible.

#### **Implementation Action AR 9.3**

Work with the Community Development Commission to expand the County’s community garden program and to identify County-owned parcels and other potential sites for community gardens.

#### **Implementation Action AR 9.4**

Develop and organic farming/hydroponic incentive program.

### **Goal AR-10**

An optimal mix of renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

- **Policy AR 10.1:** Expand the production and use of alternative energy resources.
- **Policy AR 10.2:** Encourage the effective management of non-renewable resources, including storage facilities to meet peak demands.
- **Policy AR 10.3:** Require all new development to employ passive solar techniques and active solar technologies.

#### **Implementation Action AR 10.1**

Develop a corporate sponsorship program to increase public awareness and consumer education for development related issues such as on-site alternative energy generation, water and energy conservation measures, xeriscaping, tree planting and public health.

#### **Implementation Action AR 10.2**

Streamline permitting process to accommodate renewable energy source usage for on-site and commercial production.

#### **Implementation Action AR 10.1**

Amend the landscaping ordinance to require 30% tree canopy coverage at maturity on all new development.

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## Goal AR-11

A County that maximizes energy conservation.

## Goal AR-12

A protected supply of County water resources.

- **Policy AR 12.1:** Support preservation, restoration and strategic acquisition of open space to preserve natural streams, drainage channels, wetlands, and rivers, which are necessary for the healthy function of watersheds.
- **Policy AR 12.2:** Protect natural groundwater recharge areas and artificial spreading grounds.
- **Policy AR 12.3:** Effectively manage watersheds to balance growth and development with resource conservation and flood hazard mitigation.
- **Policy AR 12.4:** Support the preparation and implementation of watershed and river master plans.
- **Policy AR 12.5:** Promote the development and use of new and improved water and flood management technologies and infrastructure such as the utilization of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.
- **Policy AR 12.6:** Maximize the conservation of water throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 12.7:** Expand the existing supply of water through the development of new supplies such as desalination.

### *Implementation Action AR 12.1*

Review and create a water conservation ordinance with appropriate enforcement procedures. Since Los Angeles County imports most of its water supply, this finite supply should be carefully distributed, used, and recycled in order to maximize efficiency and increase reliability.

**Goal AR-13**

A clean supply of water to satisfy current and projected demand.

- **Policy AR 13.1:** Require all development to provide a guaranteed supply of water.
- **Policy AR 13.2:** Eliminate point and non-point source water pollution.
- **Policy AR 13.3:** Encourage and support the increased production, distribution and use of recycled water to provide for groundwater recharge, seawater intrusion barrier injection, irrigation, industrial processes, and other non-potable beneficial uses.

**Goal AR-14**

Minimal waste and pollution in the County.

- **Policy AR 14.1:** Maintain an efficient, safe and responsive waste management system that facilitates waste reduction while protecting the health and safety of the public.
- **Policy AR 14.2:** Reduce dependence on landfills by encouraging solid waste management facilities that utilize conversion technologies and waste to energy facilities.
- **Policy AR 14.3:** Reduce the County's waste stream to negligible levels.
- **Policy AR 14.4:** Encourage the use and procurement of recyclable and biodegradable materials throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 14.5:** Encourage recycling of construction and demolition debris generated by public and private projects.
- **Policy AR 14.6:** Ensure adequate and regular waste and recycling collection services.
- **Policy AR 14.7:** Increase the use of renewable energy sources in utility and telecommunications networks.

**Implementation Action AR 14.1**

Participate in a collaborative inter-agency effort to create a Zero Waste Program that will guide County Departments toward a zero waste, 100 percent recyclable environment.

**Implementation Action AR 14.2**

Create household, commercial and industrial waste reduction programs that identify incentives and best practices for waste reducing and recycling activities.

**Implementation Action AR 14.3**

Streamline the permitting process for utility and telecommunications that utilize renewable energy sources.

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## Economic Development Policies

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- **Policy AR 15.1:** Assist in the expansion, retention and recruitment of high-wage, environmentally friendly and carbon neutral, and targeted industries providing career track ladders with a variety of quality jobs.
- **Policy AR 15.2:** Encourage and foster the development of the green economic sector, such as the renewable energy industry.
- **Policy AR 15.3:** Encourage and incentivize infill development of vacant and underutilized sites as well as brownfield, greyfield and other environmentally-challenged sites throughout the County.
- **Policy AR 15.4:** Incentivize development along existing public transportation corridors and toward the urban core.

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### *Implementation Action AR 15.1*

Explore implementing a program that will provide for community benefits and jobs/housing balance when land is converted to residential from industrial.





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# Chapter 6

## CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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# CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Conservation and Open Space Element guides the long-range preservation and conservation of the County's natural resources and open space land, and sets policy direction for the open space, natural and energy-related resources of unincorporated Los Angeles County. This Element covers the following issues:

- Open space resources;
- Parks and recreation amenities;
- Biological resources;
- Agricultural resources;
- Mineral resources, renewable energy, and energy conservation;
- Scenic resources;
- Historical and cultural resources; and,
- Water resources.

The open space and natural resources of the County are a vital part of maintaining a high quality of life for County residents and businesses. The County is fortunate to have an abundance of natural resources and amenities despite continued population and economic growth. The Conservation and Open Space Element's policies are based on the need to conserve natural resources while also meeting the public's desire for open space experiences and long-term use of resources. Los Angeles County is heavily urbanized, and most of the undeveloped land that remains is within the unincorporated areas of the County. As such, the County is regarded as the steward to the County's remaining open space areas and seeks to appropriately preserve and protect this land from inappropriate development patterns.

The Conservation and Open Space Element provides strategic direction for implementing a common conservation vision for Los Angeles County. Through a stakeholder process that encompasses public input, educational awareness, and collaborative multi-agency, public-private partnership efforts, the Element establishes policies for:

- Developing the open space and parkland footprint, setting goals for preserving and managing open space, and identifying opportunities for inventory expansion through acquisition, conservation/recreation easements, development rights transfer, land trusts, and/or joint use arrangements;
- Addressing pressing issues involving water (flood control, water pollution, and groundwater recharge), air pollution, and land use (erosion, forest conservation, and agricultural preservation) through coordinated programs and multi-benefit projects with local agencies, conservancies, and private entities;
- Protecting natural resources including open space, scenic vistas, archeological/historic sites, waterways, riparian habitats, and wildlife migration corridors;
- Promoting public health and welfare by increasing accessibility to and connectivity between outdoor recreation systems comprised of parks and open space linked through trails, river corridors, and greenways that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities; and,
- Leveraging limited funds through shared financing of multi-benefit projects to accomplish multiple resource conservation and preservation goals.

California requires General Plans to cover a multitude of topics related to Conservation and Open Space. Table 6.1 is an index of those topics and the related section under which they are covered.

## II. OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND RECREATION

### Open Space

Open space refers to both public and private lands and waters that are preserved in perpetuity or for long-term open space and recreational uses. Existing open spaces in the County include national forests, state, county, and city parks, and nature preserves. Open spaces also include recreational uses such as golf courses and beaches, and other private open space lands, including green urban rooftops.

Several agencies share the goal of managing open space and natural areas in the County. The U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manage one million acres of primarily forestland. The California State Parks Department manages over 100,000 acres of mostly wildlife and wildflower preserves, and the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors operates 1,500 acres of public beaches along the County coastline. Finally, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) has the primary responsibility of providing local and regional recreational areas to County residents. The Department of Parks and Recreation is discussed in more detail in the Parks and Recreation section below.

**Table 6.1: Required Topics Covered by the Conservation and Open Space Element**

Required Topics	Covered in Conservation & Open Space Element	Covered in Other Elements
Open Space Resources	✓	-
Agriculture and Soil Resources	✓	-
Air Quality		Air Resources Element
Biotic Resources (SEAs)	✓	-
Cultural and Historic Resources	✓	-
Landslide and Debris Flow		Safety Element
Fire Risk Areas		Safety Element
Energy Resources	✓	-
Flood Plains		Safety Element
Forest Resources and Timber	✓	-
Harbors & Marinas		Mobility Element
Scenic Hillside Areas	✓	-
Flood Inundation Zones		Safety Element
Minerals and Aggregate Resources	✓	-
Plants and Animals – Wildlife Habitat	✓	-
Reclamation of Land	✓	-
Reclamation of Water		Public Services & Facilities
Recreation Areas (Parks and Trails)	✓	-
Scenic Highways	✓	-
Soil Instability, Landslides and Erosion		Safety Element
Water Resources	✓	-
Groundwater Basins and Recharge	✓	-
Rivers & Other Waters	✓	-
Water Resources Supply		Public Services & Facilities
Water Quality	✓	-
Watershed Conservation	✓	-
Wetlands	✓	-
Fisheries	n/a	-



Table 6.2 shows a summary of the County’s open space in acres by category. Following are the designated open space and natural areas for Los Angeles County:

- **Water Bodies:** Lakes, rivers, ocean shoreline, aqueducts, and lagoons;
- **National Forests;**
- **Federal Land:** BLM, portions of the Santa Monica Mountains, National Recreation Areas, National Park Service land, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Whittier Narrows and Santa Fe Dam Recreation Areas;
- **State Land:** State parks and conservancy lands;
- **County Land:** County Parks, County Recreation areas, Wildflower Preserves, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Natural Areas, and Multi-Use Trails;
- **Other Park and Conservancy Land:** Private recreation areas, private deed restricted open space, ownership by cities, and beaches;
- **Golf Courses:** Public and private; and,
- **Other Open Space:** Flood management facility/district, aqueduct open space, and transitional open space.

Table 6.2: Summary of Unincorporated L.A. County Open Space

Open Space Categories	Acres
Inland Water Bodies	6,937.85
National Forests	664,815.69
Federal Land	11,675.95
Bureau of Land Management Land	12,837.56
State Lands	49,764.35
County Parkland and Recreation Areas	8,835.46
Other Park & Local Conservancy Land	55,106.74
Golf Courses	1,319.68
Other Open Space	10,036.58
Total Open Space Acreage	821,329.58

Source: Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning GIS Section

Open Space Policy Map

The Open Space Policy Map aids decision-makers in identifying and maintaining these lands and water bodies in an open state for public recreation, scenic enjoyment, resource production, and for the protection and study of natural ecosystems. As with any policy map, the Open Space Policy

Map should be used in conjunction with other policy maps or special designations, which identify such features as floodplains, hillside management areas, earthquake fault zones and potential landslide and liquefaction areas. Figure 6.1 shows all of the open space areas of unincorporated Los Angeles County.

Open Space Easements and Dedications

The California Open Space Easement Act of 1969 sets forth general conditions governing the creation of recognized open space easements. Agreements or contracts establishing such easements specify the standards and conditions for uses and activities permitted within the area covered.

For the purposes of the General Plan, open space dedications are defined as privately owned lands that have been set aside for permanent open space as part of a larger land development proposal. Commitment of such lands to open space use in perpetuity is typically assured through deed restrictions or dedication of construction rights, secured at the time of development permit approval. Within

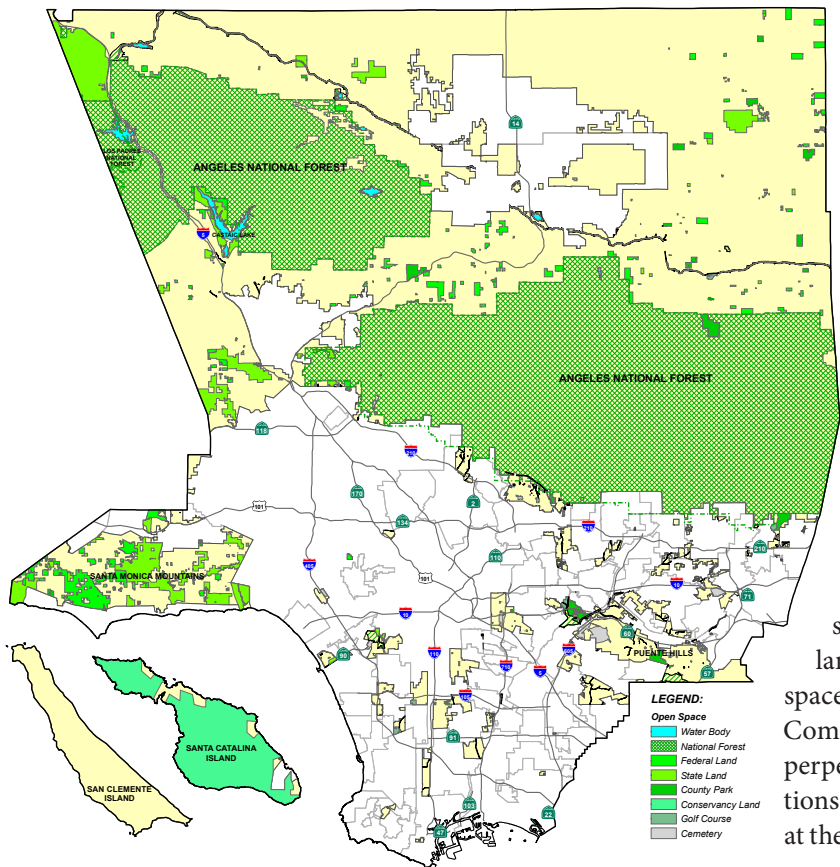


Figure 6.1: L.A. County Open Space

dedicated open space areas, standards and conditions for use are specifically set forth as conditions of the zoning permit or subdivision tract map. Area and community plans may further refine open space easement policy as necessary.

### Joint Use Agreements

Joint Use Agreements are created between the County and other entities, usually a school district, for programming County recreational uses where such uses do not conflict with school recreational programming in exchange for County funding for recreational improvements. Lands under the jurisdiction of other County Departments can also be developed where such arrangements do not conflict with the property or regulatory restrictions of those Departments.

### Multi-Benefit Parks and Open Space

Multi-benefit parks and open spaces are created through collaborative efforts among entities such as city, county, state, and federal agencies, private organizations, schools, private landowners, and industries. For example, parks and open spaces, when designed as a site for the natural



Open Space, Antelope Valley

treatment of water, flood control, and effective groundwater recharge, can achieve the combined goals of increasing the amount of parkland and conserving water resources. Riparian area protection and wetland conservation areas can be designed not only to increase recreational opportunities, but also to enhance water quality and quantity.

The connectivity of parks and open space for wildlife corridors and pedestrian access also can provide multiple benefits. When parks are well connected to communities by pedestrian pathways and public transportation, there can be a reduction of traffic which also produces an improvement in air quality and ultimately public health.

### Parks and Recreation Resources

The County's vast park and recreational resources include local and regional parks, natural habitat areas, sports facilities, playgrounds, gardens, golf courses, trails, and beaches. Recreational resources in the County are divided into three general categories. However, the traditional template of local and regional parks has been expanded to capture diverse opportunities for acquisition and development of parkland. The types of parks, recreational areas, and facilities in the County are as follows:

#### Open Space Nodes

Open Space Nodes are small pieces of open space that serve as public destination, connection, and community defining spaces. Nodes provide physical and visual breaks



Michillinda Neighborhood Park, East Pasadena



to the urban landscape and/or connect various spaces such as waterways, streets, trails, and greenways. Open space nodes are used as gathering and rest areas, and serve as opportunities for social, cultural, and community exchange. Examples of open space nodes include: equestrian and hiking trail heads, bike rest stops and/or stations with lockers and repairs, neighborhood focal points, and passive amenities such as plazas, rest areas, playgrounds, landmarks, and public art installations.

### Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small pieces of parkland that serve a residential or business area within a one-quarter mile radius. Pocket parks are often developed on urban infill sites in park-poor communities. In general, pocket parks serve a passive need and do not have on-site parking.



Community Park - Lennox

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide space and recreation activities for the immediate neighborhoods in which they are located. The common objective of all neighborhood parks is to bring people together to recreate and socialize close to home. A neighborhood park is centrally located within the neighborhood and is accessible via sidewalks or trails. The service area of a neighborhood park is typically one-quarter to one-half mile uninterrupted by major roads and other physical barriers. A reasonable walking distance is critical to a person's likelihood of utilizing a neighborhood park.

### Community Parks

Community Parks protect natural resources, preserve open spaces, and provide recreational facilities that are not available in neighborhood parks. Community parks accommodate large group activities and special events, are accessible by arterial and collector streets, and provide off-street parking. Facilities usually provided in community parks are recreation centers, gymnasiums, cultural activity facilities, and restroom facilities. Community parks also provide both active and passive recreational opportunities. Active use recreation facilities may include large play structures, sport courts, athletic fields, and swimming pools. Passive use facilities may include trails, individual and group picnic areas, open recreation areas, and unique landscape features.

### Regional Parks

Regional parks are generally defined as large multi-use areas that can include woodland, wetland, and water bodies with some formalized, active recreation facilities that benefit the surrounding regional area. Regional parks contain specialized recreational facilities that are not otherwise generally available within local or community parks.

### Trails

County trails offer a wide range of opportunities for multiple recreational/educational uses including nature based hiking and wildlife viewing, jogging, bicycling, and equestrian use. Trails provide linkages to existing parks, pedestrian paths, parkways, and river shoreline connections.

### Greenways

Greenways provide a linear area of open space along natural corridors, and often follow features such as rivers, but may also follow man-made waterways, drainage channels, and utility easements. Greenways can accommodate various

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modes of uninterrupted pedestrian travel on pathways including walking, jogging, and bicycling, and can include recreation areas and natural landscape features.

## Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities are generally single purpose facilities that serve a greater regional recreational or cultural need in the County. One notable example of a County special use facility is the Hollywood Bowl. Special use facilities require adequate public access and adequate buffers to protect adjacent residential users and to insulate the park from commercial or industrial development. Special use facilities can provide both passive (e.g. wilderness parks, nature preserves, botanical gardens, and nature centers) and active (e.g. performing arts, water parks or aquatic facilities, skate parks, and golf driving ranges and courses) needs within the region. There is no size criteria or service area associated with Special Use Facilities.

## Historic and Cultural Facilities

Historic and cultural facilities have been established to protect and promote the historic and cultural heritage of the County. Historical and cultural facilities include museums, archeological areas, and landscapes of historic and cultural significance. Some of these facilities are listed or may be eligible to be included on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Natural Areas and Habitat Preservation Areas

Natural areas and habitat preservation areas contain land that is predominantly untouched, in a natural condition, and that have a high conservation value. Each natural area has a unique identity resulting from the interaction of wildlife, landforms, geology, land use, and human impact. The primary purpose of natural and habitat preservation areas is to protect and conserve outstanding, unique, or representative ecosystems, native plant species, animal species, or natural phenomena. Natural areas and habitat preservation areas generally have few visitor facilities, such as picnic areas, lookouts, and walking trails.

## Multi-Benefit Facilities

Multi-benefit facilities are characterized as having more than one function and contributing to multiple program goals. A watershed, for example, may protect critical wildlife habitats, preserve open space, and provide trails for recreation while contributing to water conservation objectives. Utility corridors and flood control basins may also serve as areas for active or passive recreation.

## Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

Arboreta and botanic gardens are facilities where a wide variety of plants, trees, and shrubs are cultivated for educational, scientific, and ornamental purposes. These facilities may offer a variety of classes, programs, expositions, seminars, lectures, and other educational resources for people of all ages.

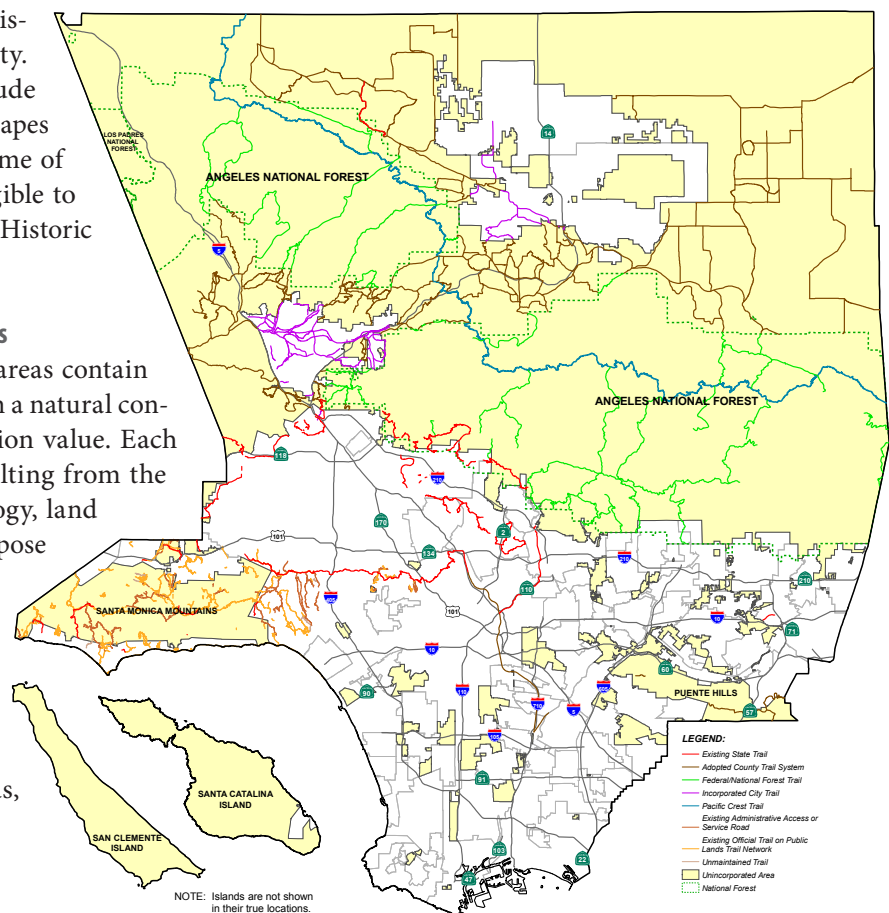


Figure 6.2: L.A. County Trail Network





Descanso Gardens

### Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) funds County park development, and the Department of Parks and Recreation oversees local and community parks in both incorporated and unincorporated County areas. In addition, the County operates several large, regional parks and recreation areas such as Castaic Lake Recreation Area, Frank G. Bonelli Regional Park, the Whittier Narrows Recreation Area, Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area, the Kenneth Hahn Recreation Area, and four (4) arboreta and botanic gardens as well as many natural areas and wildlife sanctuaries. The Department of Parks and Recreation also has jurisdiction over 19 golf courses on 17 sites located throughout the County, and maintains over 300 miles of multipurpose riding and hiking trails.

The County standard for the provision of parkland is four (4) acres of local parkland per 1,000 residents of the County's unincorporated population, and six (6) acres of regional parkland per 1,000 residents of the County's total population.

### Los Angeles County Park Plans

In April 2004, the Department of Parks and Recreation produced the Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020 (SAMP). The Department recognized the growing need for park and recreation resources to serve the growing population of the County. The SAMP inventoried County park and recreation needs by supervisorial district, made recommendations for meeting park and recreational needs, and provided a policy guide for park development throughout the County. Based on County standards for parkland and projected population growth, the SAMP report found that by 2020 the County will be approximately 4,600 acres short of the desired four (4) acres of local parkland per 1,000 County residents. In contrast, the County as a whole is projected to have an 11,684-acre surplus of regional parkland based on the six (6) acres per 1,000 County residents standard. This is in large part due to the magnitude of natural areas in District 5 (northern Los Angeles County). However, at a district by district level, the other four supervisorial districts will be deficient in regional parkland by the year 2020.

The SAMP provides a detailed analysis of parkland and open space issues on a district level, and recommends policy direction for where the County should implement resources to prevent future deficiencies in parks and open space. Further information on the Department of Parks and Recreation can be found on their website at <http://lacountyparks.org/>.



Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area, Baldwin Hills

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Park Ranger, Devil's Punchbowl Natural Area

### Park Planning and Development

During the last 25 years, a number of cities in the County incorporated, and existing cities annexed additional unincorporated areas. These jurisdictional changes resulted in the County transferring ownership of more than 50 local parks and park sites to incorporated cities.

Local parks are often established through Specific Plans or large residential developments by utilizing the Quimby Act. The Quimby Act assists local governments in creating local parkland by requiring that a residential developer either: a) dedicate 3 acres of a new project site per 1,000 residents to parkland, b) pay fees that will be used to acquire, develop, or rehabilitate parkland in that general vicinity, or c) a combination of dedication and/or fees. In many instances, local parkland is dedicated to the County by the developer, but often the Department of Parks and Recreation foregoes land for an “in lieu” fee. The Quimby Act provides funds only for the acquisition of land for parks, development of new parks, or rehabilitation of existing parks. The Quimby Act, however, does not provide funds for the operations and maintenance of parks. Part 4 of Title 21 of the County Code details the process for local parkland dedication and/or in lieu fees for County park development.

### Park Planning Issues

Within the unincorporated areas of the County there are over 800,000 acres of regional recreation areas and about 650 acres of local parkland. However, the vast majority of

regional recreation areas are outside of core urban areas where there is insufficient local parkland. Public access to parks and recreational areas is also an issue, as visiting scenic and remote areas such as the Angeles National Forest and Santa Monica Mountains poses particular transportation challenges, especially for residents with special needs.

The acquisition of recreational sites in urban areas is limited due to land availability, the high cost of land, and site contamination of urban undeveloped parcels. For these reasons, the County encourages unconventional methods and innovative ideas for meeting future recreational needs. Such non-traditional forms of parkland include landscaped medians for jogging and walking, and athletic fields that double as seasonal flood management areas. Similarly, creating pocket parks and rooftop gardens, integrating open space into redevelopment projects, and planning for more biking, hiking, and equestrian trails throughout the County will incrementally increase accessibility to public recreation areas.

### Trail Systems

Trails in Los Angeles County provide multiple uses, such as recreation, education, and emergency vehicle access. Trails are designed to provide one or more functions, depending on the trail location and the desired public use. There are



hundreds of miles of dedicated equestrian, hiking, biking, and pedestrian trails in the unincorporated areas of the County, as shown in **Figure 6.2**.

Future development of trails will be easier to complete in areas with ample open space and parkland, such as the Santa Monica Mountains, Puente Hills, Simi Hills, and portions of the Antelope Valley and Santa Clarita Valley. Urban landscapes in the southern part of the County offer different opportunities for enhancing the network of trails. Development of Watershed Management Plans and the ongoing implementation of River Master Plans, such as the Los Angeles River Master Plan and the San Gabriel River Master Plan, will lead to the development of bike trails and walking paths along the rivers and tributaries from the mountains to the ocean.

### Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area

The Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area is a part of the National Park System, which encompasses the mountain range from the Oxnard Plain in Ventura County, past Topanga Park to Franklin Canyon and the Hollywood Bowl in the City of Los Angeles. The Recreation Area preserves natural habitats, historical and cultural sites, offers recreational opportunities, and acts to improve the air quality for the Los Angeles basin. Covered by chaparral, oak woodlands, and coastal sage scrub, it is home to many species listed as rare, threatened, or endangered. The Recreation Area is different from the Angeles National



Santa Monica Mountains

Forest in that it is not solely owned or managed by one federal agency. Many agencies and individuals own parcels within the 150,000-acre Recreation Area. There are state and federally owned parks, privately owned land, residential neighborhoods, and commercial developments.

Land use regulations and jurisdictional authority in the Santa Monica Mountains is complex and involves many public and private entities. By establishing the Recreation Area, the National Park Service created a variety of recreational opportunities and helped protect the mountain's scenic resources and wildlife habitats by linking public parkland into a unified management system administered by the Service. The remaining areas within the Santa Monica Mountains are a checkerboard-like pattern of private and public land ownership. Most of the coastline lies within the City of Malibu, whereas much of the remaining Santa Monica Mountains is located within the unincorporated County, divided into two planning areas: the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone and the Santa Monica Mountains North Area. Due to the overlapping jurisdictional boundaries, a cooperative effort by the National and State Park Services, the California Coastal Commission, private landowners, and city and County governments resulted in the formation of two conservation-minded county planning documents. They are:



Emerging Needs in Parks Use Must be Addressed



Saddle Peak, Santa Monica Mountains

### **Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone Plan**

Required by state law, this Plan serves to implement the provisions and policies of the California Coastal Act at the local level. Created by the Coastal Act, the coastal zone in the Santa Monica Mountains extends inland approximately five miles from the coast. The Coastal Zone Plan's primary role is to provide more focused policy for the regulation of development within the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone, an area of nearly 80 square miles between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains North Area. (This plan has not yet been certified by the California Coastal Commission: the 1986 Malibu Land Use Plan is the current planning document for the Santa Monica Mountains coastal zone.); and,

### **Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan**

An outgrowth of a unique cooperative planning effort between local cities, the National Park Service, and area water and school districts, the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 2000. The Plan provides focused policies for the regulation of development within the unincorporated area of the Santa Monica Mountains west of the City of Los Angeles and north of the Coastal Zone boundary. The North Area Plan refines the policies of the county-wide General Plan, tailoring them to issues affecting that area.

The goals and policies which apply to open space, and parks and recreation are:

## **Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions**

### **Goal C/OS-1**

A wide range of County open space areas.

- **Policy C/OS 1.1:** Promote the preservation of open space areas throughout the County.
- **Policy C/OS 1.2:** Support the acquisition of new open space areas throughout the County.
- **Policy C/OS 1.3:** Create an established network of open space areas that provide regional connectivity, such as areas between the southwestern extent of the Tehachapi Mountains to the Santa Monica Mountains, and from the southwestern extent of the Mojave Desert to the Puente-Chino Hills.

### **Implementation Action C/OS 1.1**

Coordinate with Local, State, and Federal park agencies and conservancies to acquire open space for recreation and biotic preservation throughout the County.



## Goal C/OS-2

A balanced and interconnected network of passive and active local parks, community parks, regional recreation areas, beaches, and harbors.

- **Policy C/OS 2.1:** Develop and expand regional and local parkland in the County.
- **Policy C/OS 2.2:** Require new development to dedicate and improve parkland, as allowed by the Quimby Act. School grounds cannot be calculated as new park acreage.
- **Policy C/OS 2.3:** Direct resources to communities that are underserved by local parks.
- **Policy C/OS 2.4:** Improve current parks with needed amenities.
- **Policy C/OS 2.5:** Design parks for optimal safety, security and sustainability.
- **Policy C/OS 2.6:** Require projects to include well-designed and accessible community space.
- **Policy C/OS 2.7:** Protect marine water quality by preserving sensitive coastal resources including marine and beach habitats and sand resources, developing pollution control measures, and requiring that all permitted uses shall comply with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the State Department of Fish and Game, the California Coastal Commission, the California State Water Resources Board, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the State Lands Commission, and CEQA regulations.

### Implementation Action C/OS 2.1

Create park siting guidelines for new subdivisions to encourage parkland near schools, libraries and other public use facilities to create core community and neighborhood centers.

## Goal C/OS-3

Effective inter-jurisdictional coordination and collaboration in all aspects of park and open space planning.

- **Policy C/OS 3.1:** Participate in a collaborative, inter-jurisdictional system that manages and preserves County open spaces.
- **Policy C/OS 3.2:** Promote joint-use agreements to increase and enhance park and recreation opportunities.

### Implementation Action C/OS 3.1

Develop a Parks Master Plan for Los Angeles County. This plan will integrate countywide park planning goals into a single, coherent parks and recreation plan, sharing inter-jurisdictional responsibility for the provision of new parkland, continued maintenance, and joint-use agreements.

## Goal C/OS-4

An interconnected network of multiuse trails designed to promote the safety of all trail user groups.

- **Policy C/OS 4.1:** Expand multi-purpose trail networks for all users.
- **Policy C/OS 4.2:** Promote strategically located staging areas and trail heads to accommodate multiuse trail users.
- **Policy C/OS 4.3:** Facilitate development and integration of feeder trails into backbone trails.
- **Policy C/OS 4.4:** Trails should be located within dedicated open space areas; where infeasible, an open space buffer should separate residential lots from the edge of the trail.
- **Policy C/OS 4.5:** Where lots are clustered to protect natural resources and public safety, large lots suitable for equestrian use should be configured adjacent to the trail corridor.

### Implementation Action C/OS 4.1

Create a GIS layer of proposed federal, state, county and adjacent city trailways and trailway segments to assist staff in the project review process and aid applicants in their project design. Field verification should be conducted to determine the legitimacy of trail locations.

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Santa Catalina Island SEA

### III. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Biological Resources section identifies the valuable biological resources within Los Angeles County and establishes the goals and policy direction to utilize and conserve these resources for existing and future generations. This section will address the following issues:

- Identifying the biological resources in the County;
- Significant Ecological Area (SEAs);
- Species conservation;
- Wildlife Corridors;
- Areas of Special Biological Significance;
- Wetlands and wetland protection; and,
- National Forests.

#### Biotic Resource Identification

The biotic resources found in Los Angeles County are some of the most diverse in the United States. They represent unusual or relatively undisturbed examples of the original plant and animal species indigenous to the County and in many cases are not found outside Southern California. Maintaining these resources is invaluable as new plant or animal species may still be found within a few miles of major urban centers, and the scientific, economic, and intrinsic values of such biotic diversity is immeasurable.

The County first began to inventory biotic resources and identify important areas of biological diversity in the mid 1970s. These biologically significant areas have historically been identified in the General Plan. Today, the primary mechanism used by the County to conserve biological diversity is a planning overlay called Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs). The SEA overlay, along with other planning tools, such as CEQA, allows the County to implement its biotic resource goals through land use regulations and biological resource assessments.

#### Significant Ecological Areas

SEAs are ecologically important land and water systems that are valuable as plant and/or animal communities, often integral to the preservation of threatened or endangered species and the conservation of biological diversity in the County. Ecological Transition Areas (ETAs), a subset of significant ecological areas, identifies areas where the natural ecological systems have been degraded as a result of past or on-going land use activities, but are functionally integral to the SEA by virtue of their location. Conservation of the County's biotic diversity is the main objective of the SEA designation, and connectivity between important natural habitats plays an important role in maintaining biotic communities. SEAs are not preserves, but instead, are areas where the County deems it important to facilitate a balance between new development and resource conservation. The SEA program is a resource identification tool used to conserve and manage the County's valuable biological resources.



Quail Lake, San Andreas Rift Zone SEA

Preservation efforts in the County began in 1976, when 62 areas of biological significance were identified in the Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas Study, commonly referred to as the England and Nelson Report, and adopted as background information in the 1976 General Plan. In 1980, 61 of these biologically significant areas were adopted as part of the Conservation/Open Space Element of the General Plan. These SEAs were islands of significant habitats within larger undeveloped areas, which were intended to provide sensitive plants and animals ample open space to ensure their continued existence. However, between 1980 and 2000, many of these areas were impacted by rapid development activity within and around the SEAs. Because the “island” habitats were isolated from each other by development within the intervening areas, the opportunity for species movement and genetic dissemination was dramatically reduced.

#### SEA 2000 Update Study

In 2000, the County completed the Los Angeles County SEA 2000 Update Study. Conservation planning was the fundamental goal of this update, which was designed to accomplish the following:

- Evaluate existing SEAs for changes in biotic conditions and consider additional areas for SEA status;
- Delineate SEA boundaries based upon biotic evaluation; and,
- Propose guidelines for managing and conserving biological resources within SEAs.

The SEA 2000 Update Study was based on scientifically grounded concepts regarding the size and type of linkage systems necessary to sustain the biologically diverse plant and animal species that are found within the County. The SEA Map in **Figure 6.3** depicts each area that has been designated as ecologically significant. These areas meet one or more of the following criteria, which set them apart from other biological resources in the county:

- A. The habitat of core populations of endangered or threatened species.
- B. On a regional basis, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitats of plant or animal species that are either unique or are restricted in distribution.
- C. Within Los Angeles County, biotic communities, vegetative associations, and habitat of plant or animal species that are unique or are restricted in distribution.
- D. Habitat that at some point in the life cycle of a species or group of species serves as concentrated breeding, feeding, resting, and/or migrating grounds, and is limited in availability either regionally or in Los Angeles County.
- E. Biotic resources that are of scientific interest because they occur at the extremes of the species’ physical/geological distributions/limitations, or represent unusual variation in a population or community.

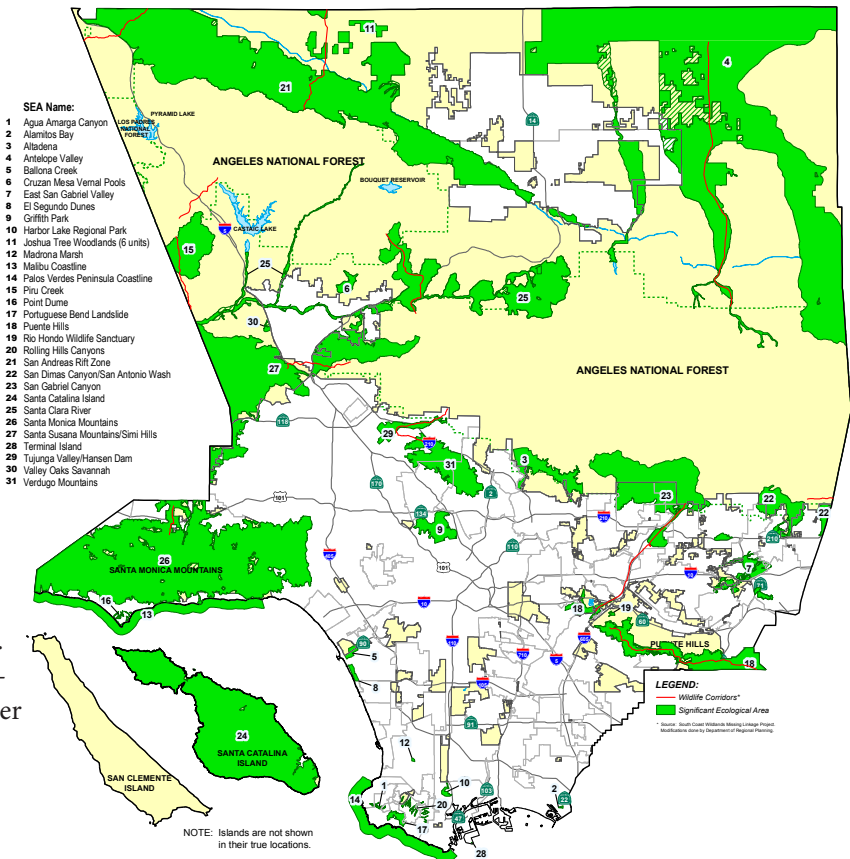


Figure 6.3: L.A. County Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs)

- F. Areas that would provide for the preservation of relatively undisturbed examples of the original biotic communities in Los Angeles County.

Further information on the procedures for development review and a description of all of the designated SEAs can be found in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan and on the County's Department of Regional Planning (DRP) website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

### SEA Project Review

A balance between development and ecological resources can be achieved through the additional level of environmental and design review that many proposed development projects must undergo when located within an SEA. This review is conducted by the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC). SEATAC is a seven member advisory committee to the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) specializing in various areas of biota in Los Angeles County. Combined, they offer over 100 years of field experience. During the permitting process, SEATAC will review the proposed project and make recommendations intended to reduce or avoid impacts, particularly in the most sensitive areas on the site. The process is designed to provide careful evaluation of projects within SEAs that will promote a balance between ecological resources and new development.

Projects in an SEA, unless exempt, will be subject to the SEA regulatory review process, depending on the type of project being proposed. Not all projects within an SEA overlay will be affected. For example, when a property owner builds one single-family home, or an accessory use to an existing single-family home, the project is exempt from the SEA regulatory review process.

### Design Guidelines for a Model Subdivision Project in an SEA:

1. Cluster structures and infrastructure within 25 percent or less of the parcel (including fire management requirements) and maintain the remaining portions of the site in a natural undisturbed state. Avoid development on slopes greater than 25 percent.
2. Retain a contiguous area of undisturbed open space over the most sensitive natural resources to maintain regional connectivity within the undeveloped area.
3. Do not alter, grade, fill or build within the entire extent of the 100-year flood plain of a river corridor.
4. Do not alter, grade, build upon, fill or divert water from any wetland area. Maintain a minimum 100 foot buffer around such areas.
5. Locate development away from wildlife corridors to ensure that corridors are left in an undisturbed and natural state.
6. Avoid impermeable perimeter fencing outside of development to allow wildlife to move easily through the undeveloped portion of the project.
7. Direct outdoor lighting downward, away from adjacent open space areas.
8. Landscape with materials that are locally indigenous and drought-tolerant.
9. Avoid removal of oak, walnut, sycamore, and Joshua trees, particularly if found in woodlands.
10. Locate roads and utilities serving the proposed development within the developable 25 percent area.
11. Locate utilities underground, adjacent to roadways, where possible.
12. Limit the extension of impervious infrastructure by siting development close to existing roadways.

Other projects in an SEA, particularly land divisions, will require an additional level of environmental review to help ensure that the proposal complies with the County's natural resource protection measures. Through the review process, the County will set limitations and conditions on the project to ensure consistency with General Plan policy and the recommendations of the Significant Ecological Advisory Committee.

### Species Conservation

Closely related to SEAs are the goals and policies linked to protecting threatened and endangered plant and animal species throughout the County. Development is the main cause of species decline in the Southern California region. Today, approximately 20 percent of the species on the federal endangered species list are found in California, and habitats for 39 (14 percent) of these species are found in the County.



State and federal agencies only protect individual species, not biotic communities as a whole system. For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act monitors and protects federally listed species, as does the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for state listed species. However, as plant or animal species are linked to a larger ecosystem for survival, the State recognizes that each local jurisdiction should bolster all species of wildlife for their intrinsic ecological values. The County uses this holistic approach in its preservation goals and policies for its biotic and ecological resources.

### Wildlife Corridors

The U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit, has defined wildlife corridors as “..avenues along which wide-ranging animals can travel, plants can propagate, genetic interchange can occur, populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters, and threatened species can be replenished from other areas.” There are a number of wildlife corridors in the County that connect the Mojave Desert, San Gabriel Mountains, Santa Susana Mountains, Santa Monica Mountains, and Puente Hills with other core areas of wildlife habitat. The ability of migratory animals to reach these core open space and rural areas is critical to protect the County’s biodiverse ecology.

Identifying these wildlife corridors is the first step in preserving their function. Sixteen (16) well-documented corridors are depicted on the Significant Ecological Areas map, Figure 6.3, based on the Missing Linkages report written and compiled by the South Coast Wildlands Project.<sup>1</sup> The preservation of wildlife corridors, not only within the County, but the entire State will ensure the potential for animal movement and plant propagation at a regional scale.

### Areas of Special Biological Significance

Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS) are those areas designated by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) as ocean areas requiring protection of marine species or biological communities from an undesirable alteration in natural water quality. There are 34 areas designated as ASBS by the SWRCB along the coast of California. Of those, six (6) are located within the jurisdiction of Los Angeles County, five (5) of which are off the coasts of the Channel Islands (one along the coastline of

the San Clemente Island and four (4) along the coastlines of Santa Catalina Island). The sixth ASBS (designated as “ASBS-24”) is located along the coasts of Ventura and Los Angeles Counties, extending from Mugu Lagoon to Latigo Point. About two-thirds of ASBS-24 lies along the coastline of the Los Angeles County.

National and State policies prohibit the discharge of pollutants into areas identified as Areas of Special Biological Significance. Specifically, the provision in the California Ocean Plan requires that “waste shall not be discharged to areas designated as being of special biological significance. Discharges shall be located a sufficient distance from such designated areas to assure maintenance of natural water quality conditions in these areas.” The County owns and maintains dozens of storm drains that discharge into ASBS-24. The County is working with other stakeholders (including other communities, regulatory agencies, environmental groups, and research institutions) to come up with appropriate policy and impact mitigation measures for stormwater related discharges in areas of ASBS.

### Wetland Resources

Wetlands and habitat associated with water bodies are areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Examples of wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs, vernal pools, and playa lake areas.



Wetlands Area

<sup>1</sup> Penrod, K., R. Hunter, and M. Merrifield. 2001. Missing Linkages: Restoring Connectivity to the California Landscape, Conference Proceedings. Co-sponsored by California Wilderness Coalition, The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Geological Survey, Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species, and California State Parks.

However, wetlands can also remain dry for long periods of time, making their identification and management potentially difficult.

Wetlands contribute to water quality and the overall health of watersheds in several ways. They slow water flow, decrease erosion, filter water runoff, and provide habitat for many endangered plant and animal species. California has lost over 90 percent of its original wetland areas, and the County has lost 95 percent. The County continues to support the wetland reclamation and conservation efforts of numerous non-profit organizations working to preserve the County's remaining wetlands.

The preservation of wetlands is a national concern, as demonstrated by the adoption of the Federal Emergency Wetlands Resources Act in 1986. The Act established a national wetlands conservation program requiring states to include wetlands in their Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans for management and preservation. The County is concerned with preserving its remaining wetlands, and any application for development in a wetland within the County's jurisdiction is forwarded to applicable state and federal agencies for further review and permitting requirements.



Lake Elizabeth, Angeles National Forest In-Holdings

#### Development Guidelines for Private In-Holding Projects in the National Forest

1. The maximum residential density shall be limited to one dwelling unit per five acres (1 du/5 ac).
2. Commercial recreation uses, such as ski facilities and campgrounds, may be permitted if consistent with the U.S. Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan.
3. Commercial uses that support user groups in the National Forest may be permitted if consistent with the U.S. Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan.
4. All private and public proposals for development within the National Forests will be reviewed concurrently by the Regional Planning Commission and the U.S. Forestry Service for compliance with the U.S. Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plan and the General Plan.

#### National Forests

The County's National Forests contain extensive biological resources. The Angeles National Forest and a small portion of the Los Padres National Forest encompass nearly 650,000 acres of land within the County. Established by an Executive Order from President Benjamin Harrison in 1892, the Angeles National Forest became one of eighteen national forests in California, and is now a State Historical Landmark. The forest stretches across the County in two vast sections, encompassing the San Gabriel Mountain Range. The forest is 1,018 square miles, which equates to 25 percent of the entire land area in the County. The surface topography is rugged; two-thirds of the forest has slopes steeper than 60 percent with elevations ranging from 1,200 to 10,000 feet above sea level.

#### Forest and Biotic Resources

Forest resources include a variety of vegetative communities ranging from semi-desert to dense woodlands supporting thousands of species of plants and animals. There are 240 miles of perennial rivers and streams as well as 19 lakes and reservoirs in the forest. A vast number of wildlife species depend on these habitats for protection, foraging and breeding, making the preservation of these areas a major concern for forestry and wildlife management.

The forest not only supports biotic communities, but it also plays a major role in the health of the major watersheds in Los Angeles County. The vast forest floor allows rainfall and snowmelt to replenish groundwater basins, providing the County with approximately 13 percent of its annual water supply. Surface water runoff fills streams and rivers,

supporting riparian habitats. Activities that occur in the forest have a potential impact not only on biotic resources, but also on the quality of local water supplies. To protect these forest functions, the U.S. Forest Service has identified two-thirds of the forest as sensitive watershed areas.

### Forest Conservation

The U.S. Forest Service prepares and periodically updates a *Land and Resources Management Plan* as a policy guide to the use of lands under their jurisdiction. Within the boundaries of the National Forests, nearly 40,000 acres are privately owned. For these parcels, commonly referred to as “in-holdings”, the County retains responsibility for land use regulation. Many privately-owned lands within the National Forests are remote in location, subject to a high degree of natural hazards, and lack adequate access to paved roads and water supply. It is the intent of the General Plan that these privately-owned parcels should be regulated in a manner consistent with the overall mission of the National Forests, as established by Congress.

Most of these properties are within the jurisdiction of the County’s land use regulations, which are consistent with forest management efforts. County land use policy does not encourage development within the forests because it requires the removal of forest vegetation around structures for fire protection, erosion from hillside development may occur, and mountainous terrain subjects structures to potential landslides due to seismic activity and to severe fire hazards. The general conditions and standards for land use decisions relative to private in-holdings within the National Forests are contained in the Conservation and Open Space Element in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan.

### County Oak Tree Ordinance

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance (Part 16 of Chapter 22.56) is intended to preserve and maintain healthy oak trees in the County during and throughout the development process. Oak trees provide shade, enhance an area’s aesthetic character, reduce air pollution, prevent soil erosion, and hold an intrinsic value for residents of Southern California. The ordinance not only recognizes

oak trees as significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological resources, but places restrictions on development for their preservation. All oak trees whose trunk measures 25 inches or more in circumference (8 inches in diameter) are legally protected from being damaged or removed during the course of a development project. This ordinance applies to all trees of the oak genus, including the Valley Oak and Coast Live Oak.

### Urban-Wildland Interface

The area where the edge of the forest and other open space meets development is called the urban-wildland interface. In light of future population projections, an increase in the number of housing units in the urban-wildland interface is expected. To reduce the impact of this development on the forest, hillside development is discouraged, especially along forest boundaries. The extension of SEAs in the interface helps to protect forest resources by requiring an additional layer of review for development of private in-holdings. This approach to development in the urban-wildland interface is consistent with the Angeles National Forest *Land and Resources Management Plan*. The goals and policies within this element address issues and concerns in the Angeles National Forest and are intended to help protect the forest’s biotic, watershed, and recreational resources.

“Despite nature’s many earlier warnings, the pollution and destruction of the natural environment has gone on, intensively and extensively, for the last three hundred years, without awakening a serious reaction; and while industrialization and urbanization have transformed the human habitat, it is only during the last half of the century that any systematic effort has been made to determine what constitutes a balanced and self-renewing environment; containing all the ingredients necessary for man’s biological prosperity, social cooperation and spiritual stimulation.”

-Lewis Mumford  
noted historian and author of *The City in History*

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The goals and policies which apply to biological resources are:

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal C/OS-5

Significant ecological systems, biotic communities, and imperiled species preserved in perpetuity.

- **Policy C/OS 5.1:** Require applicants to consult with County staff early in the development process for assistance in project designs that maximize natural features and preserve biological resources.
- **Policy C/OS 5.2:** Participate in inter-jurisdictional collaborative strategies that protect biological resources.
- **Policy C/OS 5.3:** Maximize the ecological function of the County's diverse natural habitats, such as Coastal sage scrub, Valley needlegrass and other perennial grasslands, Joshua trees, California walnut, Western Sycamore, and native Oak woodlands.
- **Policy C/OS 5.4:** Support the restoration and preservation of degraded streams, rivers, wetlands and other areas with significant biological resources.
- **Policy C/OS 5.5:** Maintain and monitor the Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) and other programs to conserve special-status species, their associated habitat and wildlife movement corridors.
- **Policy C/OS 5.6:** Require that development within an SEA be designed to meet the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee recommendations, to the greatest extent possible, and to:
  - Preserve sensitive ecological resources;
  - Maintain sufficient natural vegetative cover and open spaces to buffer sensitive resource areas;
  - Maintain water bodies and watercourses in a natural state;
  - Preserve wildlife movement corridors;
  - Site roads and utilities to avoid sensitive habitat areas or migratory paths;
  - Control light pollution;
  - Reduce erosion;

- Limit noise producing uses; and,
- Provide open or permeable fencing.

- **Policy C/OS 5.7:** Require that development mitigate 'in-kind' for unavoidable impacts on biologically sensitive areas and permanently preserve mitigation sites.

- **Policy C/OS 5.8:** Maintain watercourses and wetlands in a natural state, unaltered by grading, fill, or diversion activities.

#### *Implementation Action C/OS 5.1*

Initiate a County tree planting program with a goal of planting one tree for every resident in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Drought resistant and native trees should be strategically planted in designated locations as part of neighborhood beautification programs, along commercial corridors, and in school yards.

#### *Implementation Action C/OS 5.2*

Create a formal Mitigation Land Banking Program with appropriate criteria for a project's eligibility that will allow the purchase of land within Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) as a mitigation measure for development in areas outside of SEAs. These purchases should be strategically targeted in SEAs that are threatened by development activity along the urban fringe and within existing urban areas. Optimal mitigation would be "in-kind" with regard to species or habitat. The optimal realization radius for "in-kind" mitigation is two (2) miles, when feasible.

#### *Implementation Action C/OS 5.3*

Consider adding a new section to the Initial Study Checklist to create a review procedure for open space connectivity. Connectivity reviews shall consider the physical linkages on the project site and how it will maintain regional connectivity, particularly with regard to wildlife movement corridors.

#### *Implementation Action C/OS 4.4*

Create design guidelines for wetlands, rivers, streams, and creeks to maintain natural features, protect stream habitat, and prevent flooding and accelerated erosion.

#### *Implementation Action C/OS 4.5*

Amend the Oak Tree Ordinance to protect a ten (10) foot radius from the drip line of an oak tree from grading. Evaluate the need to modify the standards for oak tree permits in small single family lots in urban areas, as opposed to rural or common spaces.



## IV. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Agriculture plays an important role in the economy of the State of California. Los Angeles County is highly urbanized and much of the usable agrarian land has been developed. As such, agricultural lands are viewed as valuable non-renewable resources, and the County recognizes the need to protect agricultural lands from continued development and non-agricultural uses. This section:

- Describes the process for identifying valuable agricultural land;
- Identifies the agricultural land throughout the County; and
- Provides policy direction for the management and protection of the County's remaining agricultural resources.

### Agricultural Resources in Los Angeles County

Agriculture is a major component of the local and state economy. Although highly urbanized, Los Angeles County produced over \$270 million dollars in agriculture products in 2006. **Table 6.3** summarizes the dollar value of the crops and farm products produced in Los Angeles County. Nursery products remain the number one crop produced in Los Angeles County. Harvested acreage for vegetable crops dropped 30% from the previous year, and the County saw production losses from vegetable crops, field crops, and dairy and livestock production. Production gains were seen in fruit and nut crops and nursery products.

The emerging trend for agriculture in the County is one of less farming and of less land being used for agricultural activities. The 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture counted a total of 1,543 farms in the County, a 7 percent decrease from the previous census in 1997. The census showed a similar decreasing trend in the total number of acres used for farming. In 2002, the total number of acres in the County used for farming was 111,458, a 17 percent decrease from the 1997 census. Finally, although the average size of Los Angeles County farms is now 72 acres, the majority of the County's farms are 50 acres or smaller.

### Identifying Valuable Agricultural Lands

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service classifies soils into eight categories based on agricultural potential. This classification depends on issues such as slope, organic matter, flooding

**Table 6.3: 2006 Value of L.A. County  
Agricultural Crops & Commodities**

Commodity	2006 Value
Nursery Products (Indoor plants, ornamental trees, etc.)	\$191,879,000
Cut Flowers and Decoratives	\$581,000
Fruits and Nuts (Strawberries, avocados, cherries, apples, etc.)	\$26,674,000
Vegetable Crops (Root vegetables, herbs, greens, etc.)	\$33,146,000
Field Crops (Alfalfa, grain hay, rangeland)	\$11,176,000
Livestock Production	\$6,228,000
Apiary (Honey, beeswax)	\$1,211,000
Forest Products (Firewood)	\$20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$270,915,000</b>

Source: 2006 Los Angeles County Crop and Livestock Report

potential and erosion hazards. From this classification, prime soils (Class I and II soils) are identified for agricultural production. Based on this system, the California Department of Conservation Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) identify state farmland ideally suited for agricultural use. The program does not affect local land use decisions, but is simply an identification tool that can be used for policy purposes by local governments.

**Figure 6.4**, Los Angeles County Agricultural Resource Areas Map, identifies important farmland and grazing lands in Los Angeles County based on FMMP data. A thorough description of each farmland category can be found in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan. The types of farmland identified in the FMMP study and in **Figure 6.4** include the following:

- Prime Farmland;
- Farmland of Statewide Importance;
- Unique Farmland;
- Farmland of Local Importance; and,
- Grazing Land.

### Agricultural Opportunity Areas

Agricultural Opportunity Areas (AOAs) are a County identification tool that indicates land where commercial agriculture is taking place and/or is believed to have a future potential based on the presence of prime agricultural soils, compatible adjacent land uses, and existing County land use policy. Local planning efforts can identify AOA's in

their community based plans, and the County supports communities in establishing more detailed land use policy related to agricultural levels at the community level.

The intent of General Plan policy is to protect the County's agricultural resources from the intrusion of incompatible uses that conflict with or preclude viable agricultural activity. Agricultural uses are encouraged in appropriate areas throughout the County and are not limited by the mapped boundaries of designated AOAs. Applications for non-agricultural uses in these areas are evaluated for their impact upon adjacent agricultural operations.

### Williamson Act

Commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 enables local governments to enter into contracts with private landowners for the purpose of restricting specific parcels of land to agricultural or related open space use. In return, landowners receive property tax assessments which are much lower than normal because they are based upon farming and open space uses as opposed to full market value. To compensate for this loss in tax revenue, local governments receive an annual subvention from the state via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971. The only Williamson Act contract in the County is for the preservation of open space on Santa Catalina Island. For more information on the Williamson Act, visit the State of California Department of Conservation at [www.conservation.ca.gov](http://www.conservation.ca.gov).

### Urban-Agricultural Interface

Retaining valuable farmland in the County will be difficult as projected growth in the County over the next 20 years is likely to continue. Increased population growth and accompanying development may result in the conversion of farms and land with prime soil to non-agricultural uses. This scenario is especially troublesome for the North County area, which contains most of the prime farmland in the County, and is also experiencing the most rapid population growth.

As development in the County expands from urban centers into agricultural areas, clashes between land uses may occur.

Residents of new housing developments often voice concern over odors, dust, and pesticides from neighboring farms. In an effort to avoid such conflicts, the County designates areas surrounding agricultural lands as rural, allowing for rural development that is compatible with agricultural activities. Furthermore, the County encourages agricultural activities and agricultural development that do not affect the water quality of the County's water bodies.

One policy area that has significantly impacted agricultural activities is that of water supply. Historically, water supplies within the Antelope Valley Region have been used primarily for agriculture. However, due to population growth, water demands from residential and commercial uses have increased significantly. With drought conditions worsening the County's water supply, there are growing conflicts in northern County communities about how best to use existing water resources; for agricultural activities or for new development. The County recognizes the importance of balancing the water needs of both farmers and residents.

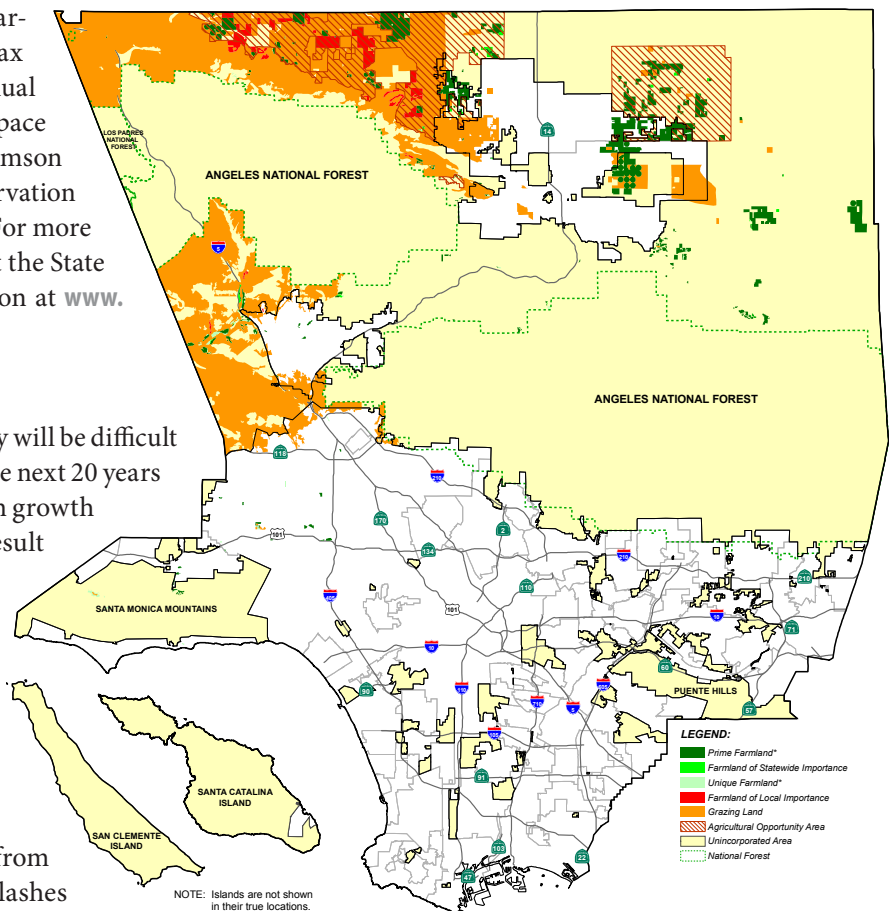


Figure 6.4: L.A. County Agricultural Resource Areas

### Sustainable and Organic Farming

Organic farming is a form of agricultural production that purposefully avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, plant growth regulators and livestock feed additives. Instead, organic farmers use crop rotation, crop residues, animal manures, other beneficial organisms and mechanical cultivation to maintain soil productivity and control pests. Organic farming is considered environmentally responsible in that the exclusion of chemicals prevents the spread of these toxins into the air, water, soil and food stuffs.

There are an estimated 75 million acres of organic farmland in the world. In the United States, “organic” foods must be certified by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Any food that claims it is organic or organically produced must attain this certification. In Los Angeles County, there is a limited amount of organic farming, reaching only 111 acres in 2006. Most farming occurring in the Antelope Valley is large agribusinesses, which have historically avoided organic farming in order to maximize yield.

The concepts of organic farming are part of what is known as sustainable agriculture. Embodied in the principles of sustainability, sustainable agriculture refers to the production of food without the depletion of the earth’s resources or polluting of the environment. More than organic farming, sustainable agriculture addresses the social, economical, and environmental effects of farming.

For more information on organic farming practices, visit the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service website at [www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org).

The goals and policies which apply to agricultural resources are:

### Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

#### Goal C/OS-6

Productive farmland that is protected for local food production, open space, public health, and the local economy.

- **Policy C/OS 6.1:** Utilize State and local data to identify prime agricultural land.
- **Policy C/OS 6.2:** Protect agricultural uses from encroaching urban and suburban development.
- **Policy C/OS 6.3:** Limit development on prime agricultural land.
- **Policy C/OS 6.4:** Support agricultural practices that minimize and reduce soil loss and prevent water runoff from affecting water quality.
- **Policy C/OS 6.5:** Support innovative agricultural practices that conserve resources and promote sustainability, such as drip irrigation, hydroponics and organic farming.
- **Policy C/OS 6.6:** Encourage agricultural activity in Agricultural Opportunity Areas and under electricity transmission line easements.
- **Policy C/OS 6.7:** Cultivate and expand farmer’s markets throughout the County.
- **Policy C/OS 6.8:** Encourage a countywide community garden and urban farming program.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 6.1

Work with the Community Development Commission to expand the County’s community garden program and to identify County-owned parcels and other potential sites for community gardens.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 6.2

Develop an organic farming/hydroponics incentive program.

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## V. MINERAL AND ENERGY RESOURCES

The Mineral and Energy Resources section addresses the use and management of valuable energy and mineral resources in Los Angeles County, and the increasing importance of conservation of these resources for future users. The demand for energy resources in Los Angeles County is high, and projected growth in the region will continue to strain our energy and mineral supply. The purpose of this section is to set forth goals and policy direction that is responsive to the community's need for energy and mineral resources, while simultaneously promoting their efficient and sustainable use. This section will address:

- Mineral resources in the County;
- Mineral Resource Zone identification;
- Mineral Resource Zone regulation and conservation;
- Oil and natural gas resources;
- Alternative energy resources; and,
- Energy conservation.



Oil Derricks, Baldwin Hills

**Table 6.4: Geologic Inventory of Mineral Resources in Los Angeles County**

Production Region	Aggregate Reserves as of 1999	Per-capita Consumption Rates:14	Estimated Depletion Year:
Little Rock Creek Fan	250 Million Tons	12.7 Tons	2046
Soledad Production Area	160 Million Tons	9.9 Tons	2046
Sun Valley Production Area	20 Million Tons	2.4 Tons	2008
Irwindale Production Area	250 Million Tons	4.0 Tons	2017

Source: California State Mining & Geology Board, Aggregate Resources in the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area 1999

### Mineral Resources in Los Angeles County

Mineral resources are commercially viable aggregate or mineral deposits, such as sand, gravel, and other construction aggregate, oil, and natural gas. California is the largest consumer of sand and gravel in the nation, but is also a major producer, generating approximately one billion dollars worth of mineral resources annually. The Los Angeles metropolitan area produces and consumes more construction aggregate than any other metropolitan area in the United States. In light of projected growth, a continuous supply of minerals for urban infrastructure is essential to the Southern California economy.

#### Mineral Resource Zone Identification

The County depends on the State of California's Geological Survey to identify deposits of regionally significant aggregate resources. These clusters or belts of mineral deposits are designated as Mineral Resources Zones (MRZ-2s). Four major MRZ-2s are designated in the County and are shown in **Table 6.4**: the Little Rock Creek Fan, Soledad Production Area, Sun Valley Production Area, and Irwindale Production Area. The Soledad and Little Rock Creek MRZ-2s contain significant deposits that can provide for future needs through the year 2046. However, the Sun Valley MRZ-2 is near depletion, and the Irwindale MRZ-2 is expected to approach depletion in 2017. The County's MRZ-2s are shown in **Figure 6.5**, the Los Angeles County Natural Resource Areas Map, which are areas that require special management due to the presence of natural resources important to the County.

#### Mineral Resource Zone Regulation and Conservation

The California Department of Conservation protects mineral resources to ensure adequate supplies for future production. The California Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of



1975 (SMARA) was adopted to encourage production and conservation of mineral resources, prevent or minimize adverse effects to the environment, and protect public health and safety. An important component of SMARA requires that all surface mine sites be reclaimed to a productive second use upon the completion of mining (Public Resources Code, sub sections 2712 (a),(b), and (c).

In a joint regulatory effort, SMARA authorizes local governments to assist the state in issuing mining permits and monitoring site reclamation efforts. To manage mining resources, the County has incorporated mineral resource policies into the Open Space and Conservation Element. In addition to these policies, Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code (Part 9 of Chapter 22.56) requires that applicants of surface mining projects submit a Reclamation Plan prior to receiving a permit to mine, describing how the excavated site will ultimately be remediated and transformed into another use.

### Oil and Natural Gas Resources

In the 1920's, Los Angeles County was the world's fifth largest oil producer. Today, oil production is not nearly as prevalent as it was almost a century ago. Small scale oil production still occurs in many parts of the County, such as in the Baldwin Hills and the Santa Clarita Valley. The California Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources permits and tracks each operating production well and natural gas storage well and ultimately monitors the decommissioning process. The County's involvement is limited to regulating the zoning and land use standards to protect surrounding communities from oil production impacts. Strict standards for the installation, operation, and decommissioning of oil derricks are necessary to protect natural resources and prevent excessive grading in hillside areas. Further information on the County codes related to oil resources can be found in the County's zoning codes at the Department of Regional Planning's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

### Development in Mineral Resource Areas

Mineral resource areas include existing surface mining activities, areas identified or to be identified as containing significant mineral resources by the State Mining and Geology Board, and areas suitable for the production of energy resources, including crude oil and natural gas. The General Plan encourages the protection of County mineral resource areas, as well as the compatible land use of areas surrounding and adjacent to these areas. The general conditions and standards to guide land use decisions in or near mineral resource areas are provided in the Conservation and Open Space Element in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan.

### Energy Resources

Energy in California is produced from a variety of natural resources, including non-renewable oil and natural gas, and renewable hydrologic, wind, and solar power. Although nonrenewable energy resources (oil and natural gas) generate a majority of the state's energy, California has one of the most diverse portfolios of renewable energy resources in the nation. Aside from existing

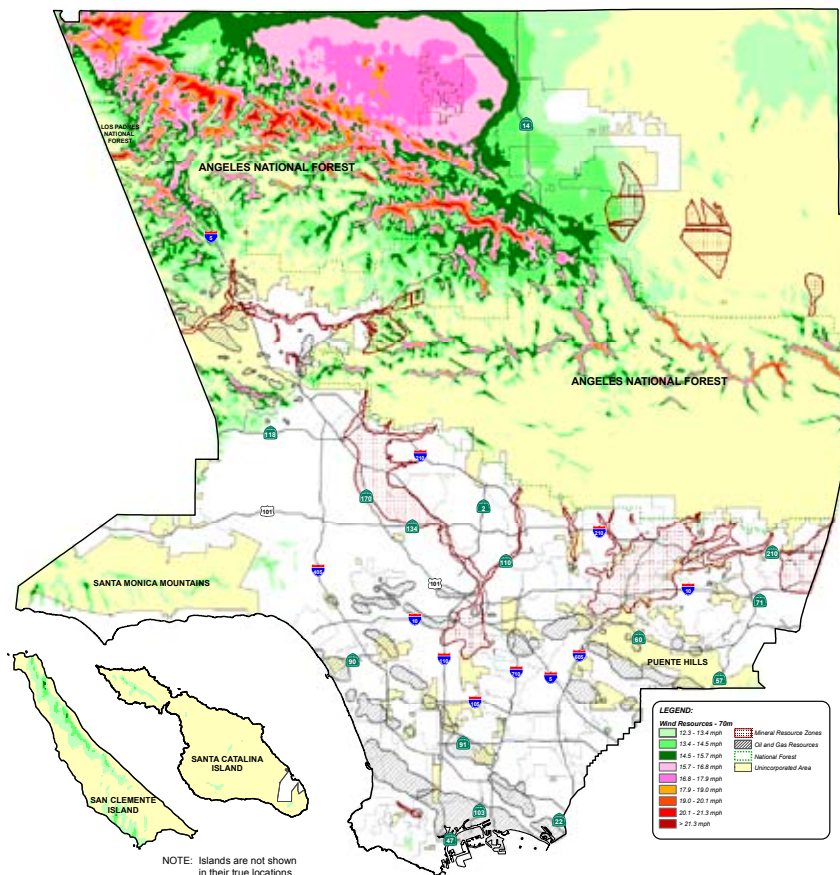


Figure 6.5: L.A. County Natural Resource Areas



Wind Turbine, Antelope Valley

oil and natural gas deposits, the state's topography and climate easily lend themselves to the production of energy from hydrologic, wind, solar rays, and tidal power. There are significant opportunities for the County to produce alternative renewable energy from renewable sources, and many of the General Plan's policies promote this course of action.

Areas suitable for renewable energy generation can be found in **Figure 6.5**, the Los Angeles County Natural Resource Areas Map. This map identifies both wind and solar power as the primary renewable energy sources available in the County. Wind power levels for all elevations can be found in the Conservation and Open Space section of the Technical Appendix.

### Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is derived from resources that are regenerative and cannot be depleted, such as wind and solar power. For this reason, renewable energy sources are fundamentally different from fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas, which are finite and also produce harmful greenhouse gases and other pollutants.

In 2005, 73-90% of utility generated electricity output was natural gas fired while renewable energy sources provided more than 10% of all electricity in California. When large hydroelectric facilities are included, that share jumps to more than 27%. The California Renewable Portfolio Standard

Program, an initiative of the California Energy Commission, calls for this share to increase to 33 percent (not counting large hydroelectric facilities) by 2020. Potential renewable energy generators in the State include solar, wind, tidal, small-scale hydroelectric, geothermal, fuel cells, biomass, and landfill gas reclamation.

An important trend of renewable energy production focuses on the development of on-site energy generation. On-site energy generation utilizes renewable energy technologies for on-site energy production. On-site energy generation promotes investment in renewable energy usage, creates an income generating use where utility companies buy back excess

power, and relieves stress and dependence on the existing electrical grid's infrastructure.

The California Energy Commission is charged with the increased development of the renewable energy sector in California. There are several programs in the State that facilitate the development of renewable energy production, as well as energy conservation, including rebates for solar, wind, and fuel cell technologies, public education, and funding research and development of emerging renewable energy technologies. For more information on the California Energy Commissions Renewable Energy Programs, go to [www.energy.ca.gov/renewables](http://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables).

### Focus Fusion

An exciting new source of renewable energy that is currently being developed for practical application is a type of nuclear fusion that utilizes hydrogen-boron fuel, an abundant natural resource, and the plasma focus device. Unlike nuclear fusion, cold fusion, and fission, focus fusion does not have any toxic waste associated with the production of energy. For more information about this safe, clean, cheap, and unlimited energy source, visit [www.focusfusion.org](http://www.focusfusion.org).

## Energy Conservation

Energy demand for transportation and non-transportation uses, including gasoline, electricity, heating, and cooling will continue to increase as the County's population grows. Energy consumption patterns demonstrate that County residents consume proportionally more energy for transportation than the rest of the State. This is due, in part, to the congested freeways in the County and the long commuting distances of the region's workforce. Low-density, automobile-dependent communities place high demands on our declining energy resources. As a result, the County General Plan policies promote rail, bus, carpool, bicycle, and pedestrian modes of transportation as alternatives to the single passenger automobile, and the Land Use element focuses on providing policies that promote the efficient development and use of land to reduce consumptive land use patterns.

State and County building codes determine the level of energy efficiency to be met in building construction. Changes to building codes over the years have resulted in substantial improvements in energy efficiency, thus requiring less power for lighting, cooling, and heating functions. In 1996, the County's Building and Safety Division of the Department of Public Works (DPW) received the California Energy Commission ACES award, Assuring Compliance with the Energy Standards, for creatively encouraging the efficient use of energy. More recently, "green building" techniques such as the use of passive solar orientation, recycled building materials, improved insulation, energy star appliances, and on-site, small-scale renewable energy generation have all proven to be a prudent means of energy conservation.

The Department of Regional Planning promotes land use planning that features innovative conservation programs that encourage renewable energy production, conservation measures, and green building practices such as passive solar site design, shade tree programs, green building practices, green roofs, and on-site wind and solar energy production. The County aims to be a leader in creating energy efficient communities through progressive and efficient land development guidelines and green techniques. Land use planning featuring innovative conservation programs that encourage renewable energy, conservation measures, and green building practices will help to reduce overall energy consumption and improve air quality in the County.

The goals and policies which apply to mineral and energy resources are:

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal C/OS-7

Locally available mineral resources to meet the needs of construction, transportation and industrial production.

- **Policy C/OS 7.1:** Protect Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) from urban development and discourage incompatible adjacent land uses.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 7.1

Through the community-level planning process, designate Open Space-Mineral Resources areas.

### Goal C/OS-8

Mineral extraction activities that are conducted in a manner that protects the environment.

- **Policy C/OS 8.1:** Require mineral resource extraction activities to comply with the regulations of the County Zoning Ordinance, and State laws and guidelines in accordance with provisions set forth by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) and the California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources.
- **Policy C/OS 8.2:** Encourage the recycling of abandoned mineral extraction sites to productive second uses.
- **Policy C/OS 8.3:** Require appropriate levels of remediation for all oil and natural gas production sites based on perceived future use

#### Implementation Action C/OS 8.1

Through the local-level planning process, create standards for buffering around mineral resource sites.

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**Goal C/OS-9**

An optimal mix of renewable and non-renewable energy sources.

- **Policy C/OS 9.1:** Expand the production and use of alternative energy resources.
- **Policy C/OS 9.2:** Encourage the effective management of non-renewable resources, including storage facilities to meet peak demands.
- **Policy C/OS 9.3:** Require all new development to employ passive solar techniques and active solar technologies.

**Implementation Action C/OS 9.1**

Develop a corporate sponsorship program to increase public awareness and consumer education for development related issues such as on-site alternative energy generation, water and energy conservation measures, xeriscaping, tree planting and public health.

**Implementation Action C/OS 9.2**

Streamline permitting process to accommodate renewable energy source usage for on-site and commercial production.

**Goal C/OS-10**

A County that maximizes energy conservation.

- **Policy C/OS 10.1:** Development should be designed to provide substantial tree canopy cover, utilize light-colored paving materials and reflective roofing to reduce the 'urban heat island' effect.

**Implementation Action C/OS 10.1**

Amend the County Code, as applicable, to require 30% tree canopy coverage, at maturity, on new development.

**Implementation Action C/OS 10.2**

Purchase CITYGreen ArcGIS to allow planners to evaluate landscape plans and proposed development for summer energy conservation, native tree preservation and impacts to air quality.

**Implementation Action C/OS 10.3**

Update and adopt the draft Solar Energy Subdivision Design Manual, which depicts passive and active solar energy design guidelines.

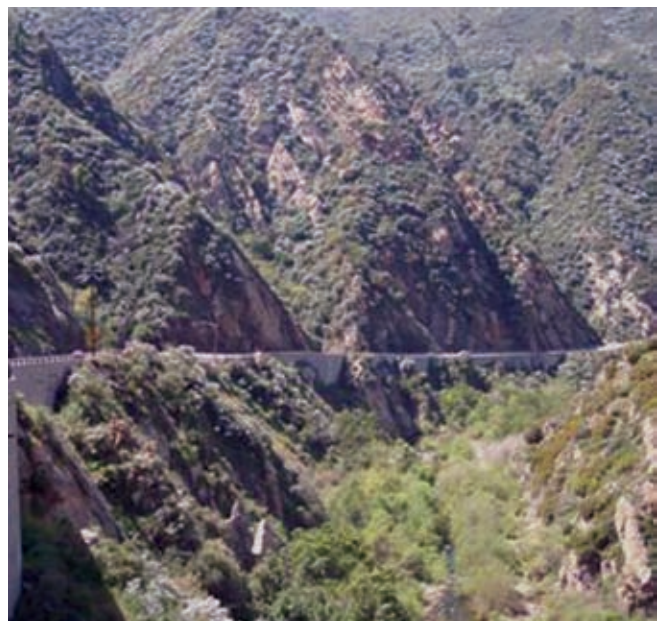
**VI. SCENIC RESOURCES**

Los Angeles County is home to some of the most iconic and beautiful vistas in the world. The County recognizes that the coastline, mountain vistas, and other scenic features of the region are a significant resource for County residents and businesses. This section of the Open Space and Conservation Element addresses the desire of the County to preserve its valuable designated scenic areas, vistas, and roadways. The County's scenic resources consist of designated scenic highways and corridors (or routes), and County recognized scenic hillsides and ridgelines. This section specifically addresses:

- Official State Scenic Highways;
- County scenic corridors and routes;
- Scenic hillsides and ridgelines; and,
- Hillside development and regulation.

**Official State Scenic Highways and Corridors**

The Los Angeles County Scenic Highway Plan was created to conform to the State Scenic Highway Program. The State Scenic Highway Program was created in 1963 to protect and enhance the natural scenic beauty of California highways and adjacent corridors through special conservation treatment. According to State guidelines, a highway may be designated scenic depending upon how much of the natural



Malibu Canyon-Las Virgenes Scenic Highway



**Table 6.5: County Official State Scenic Highways**

Designation	Highway	Location
<b>State Scenic Highway</b>	Angeles Crest Highway-Route 2	From 2.7 miles north of I-210 to the San Bernardino County Line.
<b>County Scenic Highway</b>	Mullholland Highway (2 sections)	From State Route 1 to Kanan Dume Rd.  From West of Cornell Rd. to East of Las Virgenes Rd.
<b>County Scenic Highway</b>	Malibu Canyon – Las Virgenes Highway	From State Route 1 to Lost Hills Rd.

Source: California Department of Transportation, 2007

landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view.

To be designated as an official state scenic highway, a city or county must create a Corridor Protection Program, and a governing body (i.e., the County's Board of Supervisors) must approve of the program. Each Corridor Protection Program must contain the following five elements related to preserving the nominated scenic highway:

- Regulation of land use and density of development;
- Detailed land and site planning;
- Control of outdoor advertising;
- Careful attention to and control of earthmoving and landscaping; and,
- Attention to design and appearance of structures and equipment.

Further information on the process to nominate a highway for official state scenic designation can be found at the California Department of Transportation Scenic Highway Program website at [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic\\_highways/scenic\\_hwy.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/scenic_highways/scenic_hwy.htm).

### County Official Scenic Highways

Los Angeles County contains one official state scenic highway and two official County scenic highways, as seen in Table 6.5 and Figure 6.6.

The State Scenic Highway Program currently includes eight (8) other routes that have been nominated and are eligible for official state designation. These routes can be found in Table 6.6, and can also be seen in Figure 6.6. To propose further routes for official state scenic designations in unincorporated areas of the County, please contact the Department of Regional Planning.

### County Scenic Designations

In addition to official State-designated Scenic Highways, the County works to identify, protect, and enhance its scenic resources through its own countywide scenic designations. The General Plan also allows for community-based plans to further identify and designate scenic resources, corridors, or routes in their communities that differ from the official State designation. For example, the

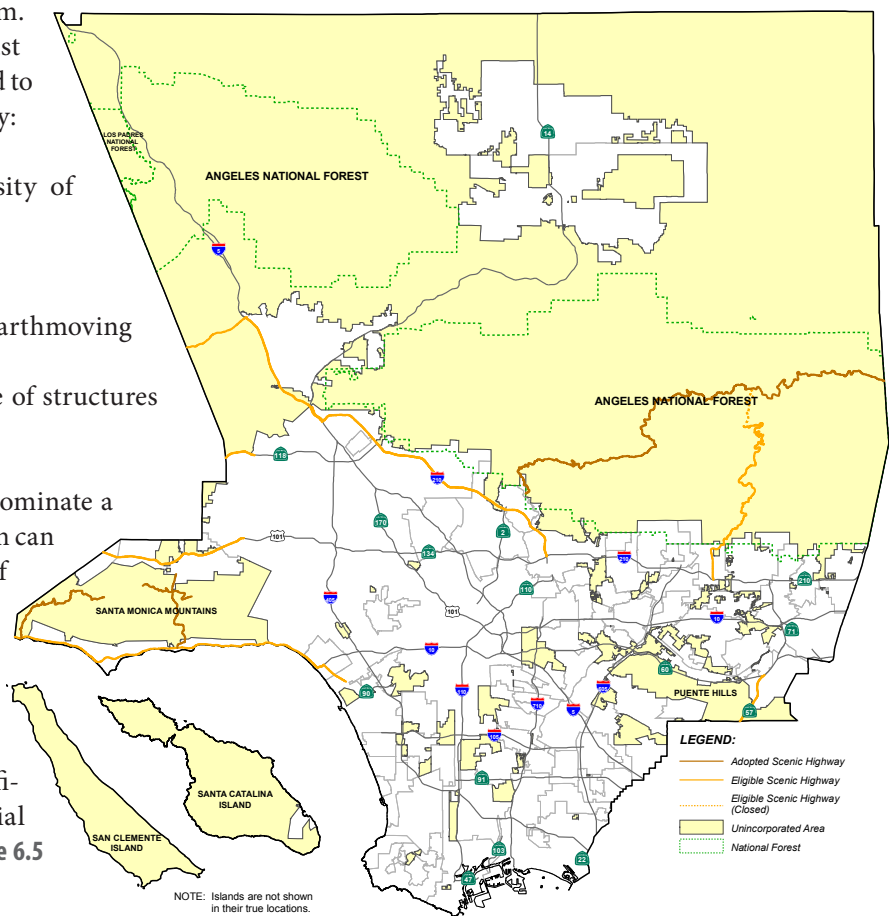


Figure 6.6: L.A. Adopted and Eligible Scenic Highways

*Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan* (2000) identifies the routes and corridors of scenic importance under its jurisdiction, and applies more specific goals, policies, and implementation actions related to the preservation and protection of the area's individual scenic resources.

The Technical Appendix to the General Plan provides detailed descriptions for the selection of scenic resources, scenic corridors, and provides practices for their continued protection and preservation.

### Other Scenic Resources

The scenic hills and mountains of the County play a major role in defining the County's landscape and

**Table 6.6: Eligible County Official State Scenic Highways**

Route Number	Eligible Route	Location
1	<b>Pacific Coast Highway (2):</b> From State Route 187 near Santa Monica to State Route to Ventura County Line.	Postmiles 32.2 – 21.1.
5	<b>Golden State Freeway (I-5):</b> From I-210 near Tunnel Station to State Route 126 near Castaic.	Postmiles R 44.0 – R 55.5
39	<b>State Route 39:</b> Beginning at I-210 near Asuza, to State Route 2 in the Angeles National Forest.	Postmiles 14.1 – 44.4
57	<b>State Route 57:</b> Beginning at State Route 90 to State Route 60 (Pomona Freeway) near the City of Industry.	Postmiles 19.9 – R 4.5
101	<b>Ventura Freeway (101):</b> From State Route 27 (Topanga Canyon Blvd.) to the Ventura County Line.	N/A
118	<b>State Route 118:</b> From State Route 23 to Desoto Ave. to near Browns Canyon.	Postmiles 17.4 – R 2.7
126	<b>State Route 126:</b> From the Ventura County Line to the I-5 interchange in Castaic.	Postmiles R 2.0 – R 5.8
210	<b>Foothill Freeway (210):</b> From I-5 near Tunnel Station to State Route 134.	Postmiles R 0.0 – R 25.0

Source: California Department of Transportation, 2007

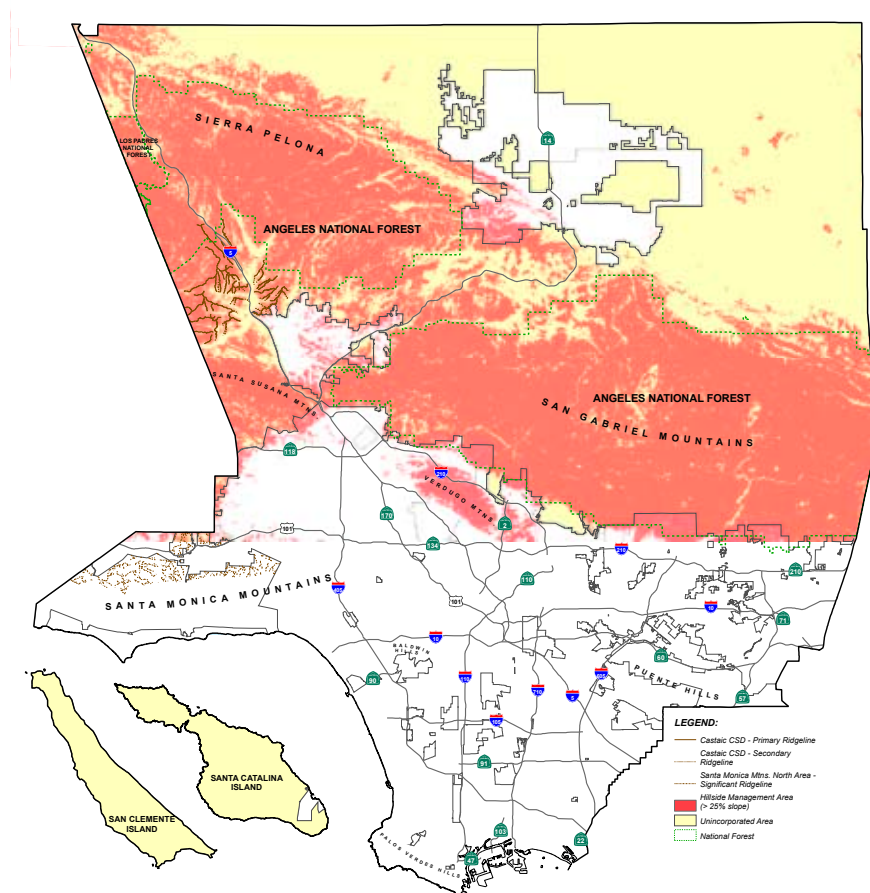


Figure 6.7: L.A. County Ridgelines and Hillside Management Areas

communities. The San Gabriel Mountains, Verdugo Hills, Santa Susana Mountains, Simi Hills, Santa Monica Mountains, and Puente Hills are viewed as public resources, and the County supports the protection and preservation of these resources.

Currently, there are two designated County scenic resources: significant ridgelines and scenic hillsides.

### Significant Ridgelines

There are numerous ridgelines that provide dramatic views for unincorporated County communities. The General Plan supports the protection and preservation of the County's significant ridgelines, and allows individual communities to identify and regulate their ridgeline resources. To identify significant ridgelines, the following criteria must be considered:

### Development Guidelines for Projects in Scenic Resource Areas

The following guidelines apply to projects that are located within Scenic Resource Areas (Scenic Corridors, Significant Ridgelines, and adjacent to Scenic Highways):

1. Development must be designed to create a consistent visual relationship with the natural terrain and vegetation.
2. Structures and landscaping must complement and enhance scenic views, and landscaping must be drought-tolerant.
3. All grading activities must conform to the existing terrain.
4. Watercourses must be preserved in their present condition except where necessary, or be restored to their appearance and function.
5. Commercial or industrial uses shall be conducted within closed buildings, except for restaurants, recreational uses, and gasoline/service stations.
6. Outdoor advertising and billboards is prohibited within 500 ft. of the roadway in Scenic Resource Areas.
7. Roadside rests, vista points, and scenic areas with interpretive displays should be incorporated into development projects.

- Topographic complexity;
- Uniqueness of character and location;
- Presence of cultural or historical landmarks;
- Visual dominance on the skyline or viewshed, such as the height and elevation of a ridgeline; and,
- Environmental significance to natural ecosystems, parks, and trail systems.

### Scenic Hillsides

To preserve the natural beauty of hillsides in the unincorporated County, land use activities that may result in environmental degradation are subject to regulations and design guidelines that limit hillside development based on slope, soil, natural drainage channels, seismic hazards, and fire hazards. By imposing these design conditions, a more sensitive development occurs in a manner that respects the natural topography and biological resources of the area. To this end, the County utilizes the Hillside Management

Ordinance as a regulatory mechanism to consider potential public safety, environmental degradation, and hillside alteration in areas where the slope is 25% or greater. **Figure 6.7** shows a map of the County's Hillside Management and designated Ridgeline Management Areas. Further information on design standards for hillside development can be found on the Department of Regional Planning's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/>.

### Threats to Scenic Resources

Southern California has lost many of its scenic resources due to a variety of human activities. In the absence of adequate land use controls, many scenic amenities have been adversely affected by unsightly development and urban sprawl. The visual pollution associated with the proliferation of billboards, signs, utility lines, and unsightly urban uses detracts from and often obscures many of our scenic resources. Another factor that significantly affects visual quality is air pollution. Man-made sources of air pollution, particularly tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks contribute to the reduction of visibility and to the deterioration of some vegetation and wildlife.

The County recognizes the need to preserve its scenic corridors, and weighs that need against the public and private costs of regulation. Communities often have strong opinions on scenic resources as well as an interest in how land use practices can either protect or hamper scenic corridors.



Significant Ridgeline, Santa Monica Mountains

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The goals and policies which apply to scenic resources are:

### Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

#### Goal C/OS-11

Protected visual and scenic resources.

- **Policy C/OS 11.1:** Identify and protect scenic resources.
- **Policy C/OS 11.2:** Identify and protect the County's scenic highways, corridors and routes.
- **Policy C/OS 11.3:** Manage development in hillside areas (25% slope or greater) to protect their natural and scenic character and minimize risks from natural hazards, such as fire, flood, erosion and landslides.
- **Policy C/OS 11.4:** Reduce light trespass and light pollution.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 11.1

Create a scenic corridor and scenic viewshed program and/or ordinance to protect the County's remaining scenic resources.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 11.2

Develop and adopt a "Dark Skies" ordinance.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 11.3

Update Hillside Management CUP to separate the Hillside Management provisions from the SEA provisions; clarify the applicability to commercial and residential development; remove the threshold calculation that triggers the CUP; and modify open space requirements.

## VII. HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Historical and cultural resources are an important part of the County's identity and contribute to the local economy. This section sets forth goals and policy direction for the management and preservation of historical, cultural, and paleontological resources in the County. This section addresses:

- Identifying the County's cultural and historical resources;
- Programs for cultural resources and CEQA; and,
- Cultural, historical, and paleontological resource sites in unincorporated Los Angeles County.

### Identifying Cultural and Historical Resources

The County's cultural heritage resources are nonrenewable and irreplaceable. The County aims to promote public awareness of their value, and their public enjoyment should be fostered whenever possible. To this end, the County promotes cooperative efforts between public and private organizations to identify, restore, and preserve these resources.

Cultural heritage resources include historic buildings, structures, artifacts, sites, and districts of historic, architectural, archaeological, or paleontological significance. They may



Hall of Records, An Unidentified Historical Resource



be locations of important events that were turning points in the history of the County. They may also be unique structures or groups of structures possessing distinct architectural features that depict a historical period of the County. Officially recognized resources are integral parts of the built and natural environments, and must be considered in County land use actions. It is recognized that there may be other sites and structures that have not been identified and that have importance to local communities. In such cases, a local-level plan may designate these sites or structures for special land use regulation.



William D. Davies Memorial Building, Altadena

### Programs for Cultural and Historical Resources and CEQA

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) provides a mechanism for the consideration of cultural heritage resources as a part of the local environmental review process. The County embraces the importance of protecting cultural heritage resources and is guided in development decisions by federal and state programs that officially recognize these resources. These following legislative tools improve the protection and enhancement of historic and cultural structures:

- **The Los Angeles County Historical Landmarks and Records Commission:** Reviews and recommends cultural heritage resources in the unincorporated area for inclusion in the State Historic Resources Inventory;
- **The California State Parks Department's Office of Historic Preservation:** Maintains the State Historic Resources Inventory, a compilation of all resources formally determined eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic

Places, the California Register of Historical Resources<sup>2</sup> or designated as State Historical Landmarks or Points of Historical Interest<sup>3</sup>;

- **The Federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979:** Protects archaeological resources and provides requirements for permit issuance to excavate or remove archaeological resources;
- **The Native American Heritage Act of 1992:** Provides guidelines for the protection of Native American remains and artifacts;
- **CEQA:** Provides guidelines for the identification and protection of archaeological sites, artifacts, and paleontological resources. If a project threatens an

<sup>2</sup> National Register of Historic Places is administered by the U.S. Department of Interior National Park Service under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461-467 (1935) (amended)) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 (1966) (amended)). California Register of Historical Resources (Title 14, Chapter 11.5 (1992)) is administered by the California Department of Parks and Recreation Office of Historic Preservation. Established in 1992, the California Register is the authoritative guide to the State's significant cultural heritage resources. The California Register automatically includes any resource listed in the National Register and all State Historical Landmarks from No. 770 onward. Landmarks from No. 1 through No. 769 that are not listed on the National Register are pending evaluation for inclusion in the California Register.

<sup>3</sup> State Historical Landmarks are recognized under the California Registered Historical Landmarks Program (Ca. Pub. Res. Code Section 5021) established in 1949. They are considered to have statewide significance. Points of Historical Interest are recognized under the Points of Historical Interest Program (Ca. Pub. Res. Code Section 5021) established in 1965. Points of Historical Interest are considered to have local (city or county) significance and are not listed in the California Register unless reclassified as State Historical Landmarks. Points of Historical Interest that have not been reclassified as State Historical Landmarks or listed in the National Register are pending evaluation for inclusion in the California Register.

archaeological or paleontological resource, the project is required to provide mitigation measures to protect the site or enable study and documentation of the site. Assessment of these resources requires a survey prepared by a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist; and,

- **The State Historical Building Code (SHBC):**

A set of regulations adopted in 1979<sup>1</sup> that was created to improve the protection and enhancement of historic structures. The intent of SHBC is to protect California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction problems inherent in historic buildings and offering an alternative code to deal with these problems. The SHBC provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration, or relocation of structures designated as historic buildings. SHBC regulations are intended to facilitate restoration or accommodate change of occupancy so as to preserve a historic structure's original or restored architectural elements and features.

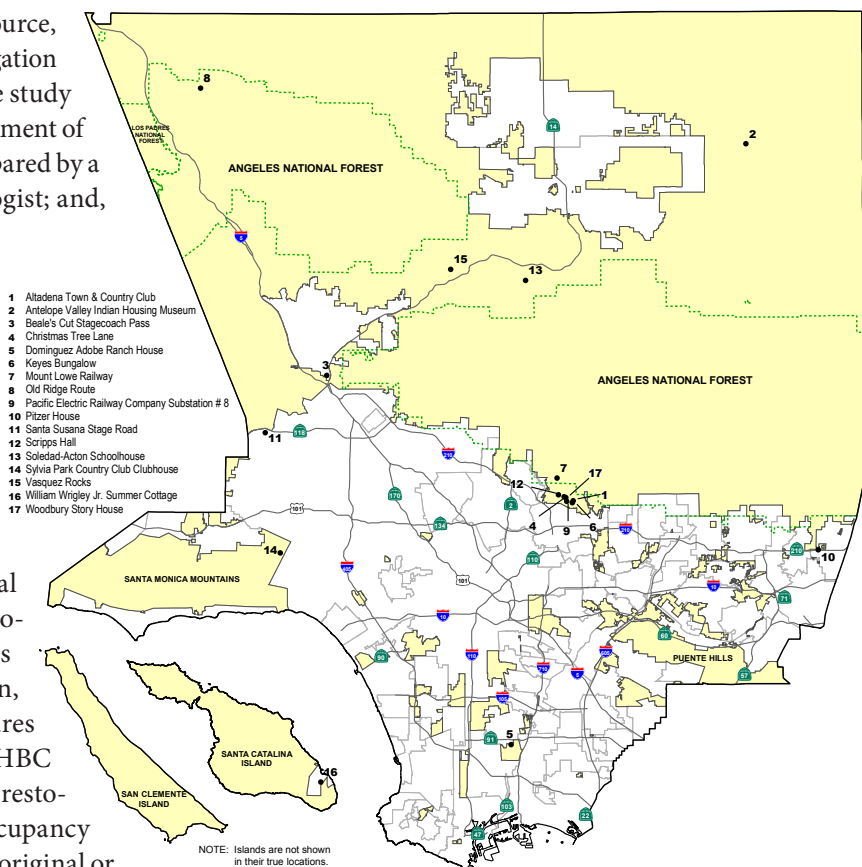


Figure 6.8: Historical and Cultural Resource Sites in Unincorporated L.A. County

## Cultural, Historical, and Paleontological Resource Sites in Unincorporated Los Angeles County

The California Register lists 402 significant resources in Los Angeles County. This includes 379 sites listed in the National Register<sup>5</sup> and 23 State Historical Landmarks above No. 769 that are not listed in the National Register. From the National Register, 18 resources are National Historic Landmarks, a limited designation that has been assigned to fewer than 2500 resources nationwide. Additionally, there are 55 State Historical Landmarks<sup>6</sup> and 49 Points of Historical Interest<sup>7</sup> in the County that are not presently listed in the California Register. Among this vast number of resources are missions, the La Brea tar pits, remnants of vast ranchos, routes of early explorers, stagecoach stations,

forts, railroad depots, and the homes of prominent people who shaped local history. Eighteen (18) of these resources are located in the unincorporated areas of the County. The complete list of cultural and historical resources in unincorporated areas of the County can be found in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan. **Figure 6.8** displays the location of the historical and cultural resource sites in the unincorporated County.

## Senate Bill (SB) 18

Senate Bill 18 (2004) requires California cities and counties to contact and consult with California Native American tribes prior to amending or adopting a General Plan or Specific Plan, or designating land as open space. SB 18 requires city and county governments to consult with California Native American tribes to aid in the protection of traditional tribal cultural places through local land use planning.

4 The SHBC is contained in Part 8, Title 24, California Code of Regulations.

5 <http://www.nr.nps.gov/>.

6 [www.ohp.parks.ca.gov](http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov). Roberts, George and Jan Roberts. 1994. Discover Historic California, 4th ed. Baldwin Park: GemGuides.

7 California Office of Historic Resources

7 California Office of Historic Preservation, Points of Historical Interest.

SB 18 provides California Native American tribes an opportunity to participate in local land use decisions at an early stage in the planning process for the purpose of protecting, or mitigating impacts to sites of cultural significance. Involving tribes early allows for ample consideration of cultural places in the context of broad local land use policy, before individual site-specific, project-level land use decisions are made by a local government.

The goals and policies which apply to historical, cultural and paleontological resources are:

### Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

#### Goal C/OS-12

Protected cultural heritage resources.

- **Policy C/OS 12.1:** Support an inter-jurisdictional collaborative system that protects and enhances the County's cultural heritage resources.
- **Policy C/OS 12.2:** Support the preservation and rehabilitation of historic buildings.
- **Policy C/OS 12.3:** Ensure proper notification procedures to Native American tribes in accordance with Senate Bill 18 (2004).
- **Policy C/OS 12.4:** Promote public awareness of the County's cultural heritage resources.

#### Implementation Action C/OS 12.1

Evaluate the efficacy of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the designation of historic landmarks within the unincorporated areas of the County.

#### Guidelines for a Model Project in Cultural Resource Areas

If a CEQA analysis determines that a project will impact a cultural resource area (historic, cultural, or paleontological), the following guidelines will apply:

1. A literature search for valid archaeological or paleontological surveys shall be conducted (for each initial study of a public or private project).
2. If an impact or potential impact to a cultural resource is anticipated, a study of the project site shall be made by a qualified archaeologist or paleontologist who shall determine the scientific value of finds, if any, and a recommendation as to their preservation or disposition.
3. The County Historical Landmarks Commission must be notified of all cultural, historical, or paleontological findings.
4. All significant impacts to cultural resource sites must be mitigated to the greatest extent feasible, and a reasonable period of time must be allowed to salvage the site.
5. The integrity of significant historical features of the structure and/or site should be maintained to the largest extent possible.
6. The integrity of sightlines to the structure or site should be maintained.
7. Development adjacent to a cultural resource site should consider design guidelines and appropriate building design, setbacks, landscaping, and other factors that will protect the integrity of the cultural resource area.
8. Materials collected during surface surveys or salvage operations should be donated to an appropriate nonprofit institution. In the event the property owner wishes to retain possession of the artifacts found, it is desirable that archaeologists or paleontologist be allowed to study and photograph the artifacts.

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## VIII. WATER RESOURCES

The arid climate and landscape of Los Angeles County requires that water be managed as an invaluable resource. The County recognizes that the effective management and preservation of its water resources is vital to preserving a high quality of life for County residents and businesses.

This section of the Conservation and Open Space Element explores water resources and water quality issues in the County, and sets forth goals and policy direction for the management of the County's water resources.



Malibu Creek State Park

### Background

#### Federal and State Water Plans

The federal government established the Clean Water Act (CWA) in 1972 to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters” with the goal that “wherever attainable water quality should provide for the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife, and provide for recreation in and on the water.” The State Water Resources Control Board (State) and the Regional Water Quality Control Boards, through the Ocean

Plan and the Basin Plan, respectively, implement portions of the CWA by designating water-bodies and their existing and potential uses as beneficial uses and set forth policies that protect such beneficial uses from degradation.

In 1949, nine (9) California Regional Water Quality Control Boards were established to protect the quality of receiving waters from adverse impacts of wastewater discharges. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act, also known as the California Water Code, enacted in 1969 by the State of California authorized the State to adopt, review, and revise policies for all water-bodies in the state. The State also directed the Regional Boards to develop the Basin Plans to address water quality issues and protection for inland water-bodies. The Basin Plan for Los Angeles was adopted in 1975 and is comprised of the Water Quality Control Plan for the Santa Clara River Basin and the Water Quality control Plan for the Los Angeles Basin with the latest amendment to the plan completed in 1994. Antelope Valley, in the northeastern portion of the county, is under the jurisdiction of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Lahontan Basin plan took effect in 1995, replacing three earlier plans.

Under the California Water code, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted the California Ocean Plan in 2005 to protect water quality for the use and enjoyment of the public through the control of the discharge of waste into the ocean. The beneficial uses to be protected include “industrial



Whittier Narrows



water supply; water contact and non-contact recreation, including aesthetic enjoyment; navigation; commercial and sport fishing; mariculture; preservation and enhancement of designated Areas of Special Biological Significance (ASBS); rare and endangered species; marine habitat; fish migration; fish spawning and shellfish harvesting.”

The Los Angeles and Lahontan Regional Boards’ Basin Plans and the State Water Board’s Ocean Plan protect the water-bodies by designating them with beneficial uses and implementing programs to protect such uses. There are 24 beneficial uses developed and defined by the State and the Regional Boards designated to water-bodies as “existing” or “potential”. Examples of beneficial uses include: municipal and domestic supply, water contact recreation, and preservation of biological habitats. A complete list of all the beneficial uses can be found in the Water Quality Control Plan Los Angeles Region, 1994, the Water Quality Control Plan for the Lahontan Region, 1995, and the California Ocean Plan, 2005 ([http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4/water\\_issues/programs/basin\\_plan/basin\\_plan\\_documentation.shtml](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/basin_plan_documentation.shtml); [http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb6/water\\_issues/programs/basin\\_plan/references.shtml](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb6/water_issues/programs/basin_plan/references.shtml); <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/plnspols/docs/oplans/oceanplan2005.pdf>).



LA County Stream



LA County Flood Control Districts Spillway

### Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs)

Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) define a clear vision and strategy for the sustainable management of water resources within a specific region delineated by one or more watersheds. IRWMPs generally contain an assessment of current and future water demand, water supply, water quality, and environmental needs. They address the challenges for delivering a stable and clean supply of water for the public, addressing stormwater and urban runoff water quality, providing flood protection, meeting water infrastructure needs, maximizing the use of reclaimed water, enhancing water conservation, and promoting environmental stewardship.

During the planning process, all stakeholders, including water distributors and purveyors, regional waterworks and sanitation districts, local public works departments, environmental organizations, non-profits, and other vested interests work together to develop communal goals, objectives, and strategies. Since water related issues are addressed on a regional, watershed basis, these plans are instrumental in building consensus amongst the various stakeholders in the development and prioritization of an action plan that is complementary and leverages inter-jurisdictional cooperation, resources, and available funding.

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Castaic Lake Reservoir

There are three IRWMPs in the County:

- Antelope Valley IRWMP;
- Upper Santa Clara River IRWMP; and,
- Greater Los Angeles County IRWMP.

For more information on the IRWMPs, please go to [www.avwaterplan.org](http://www.avwaterplan.org), [www.scrwaterplan.org](http://www.scrwaterplan.org), or [www.lawaterplan.org](http://www.lawaterplan.org), respectively.

## Water Sources

The following discussion outlines the primary types of water resources in the County.

### Major Surface Water

Most major surface waters serve as storage facilities. Lakes and reservoirs receive rainwater and snowmelt from rivers, streams, and imported supplies from aqueducts, holding them until the water is needed. Most of the County's major surface waters are controlled by man-made facilities. For example, a series of dams and spreading grounds are used to capture close to 80 percent of the water that flows from the San Gabriel Mountains and through the San Gabriel River. Some of these surface waters support fish and wildlife and provide recreation areas for County residents that are compatible with flood management and water conservation operations. The County protects these areas by designating them open space and limiting the type and amount of land use activities that occur in their vicinity.

Due to the County's climate patterns, streams and rivers receive intermittent heavy winter rainstorms and little summer or fall precipitation, which affects the consistency of water flow. Small tributaries are also highly sensitive to pollution, and the cumulative impacts of polluted runoff and unnatural levels of silt degrades the water quality of these waterways to a much greater extent than a high volume river with continuous flow. The County is working, within its jurisdiction, to improve the health of rivers, streams, and minor tributaries to enhance overall water resources, groundwater recharge, and wildlife habitat.

### Groundwater

Groundwater is a crucial component of local fresh water supplies. Groundwater is the water beneath the earth's surface that can be collected with wells, tunnels, or drainage galleries, or that flows naturally to the earth's surface via seeps or springs. Eight (8) major groundwater basins provide about one-third of the County's overall water demand, except during times of drought. A reduction or decline in groundwater quantity or quality is detrimental to water users countywide, especially to the hundreds of households in rural areas who depend solely on private wells.

Water accumulates beneath the ground in saturated zones, or aquifers, which are referred to as groundwater basins. These aquifers can hold millions of acre-feet (AF) of water and extend for miles. Basins fill with water as a result of snowmelt, rain, and surface flow percolating through



the soil. A major issue in the County is that most of the groundwater basins never fully recharge because the rate of water extraction is much higher than the rate of natural recharge.

In the southern part of the County, the natural recharge process is severely hampered by impervious surfaces (surfaces that do not permit the absorption of fluids) associated with urbanization and development. In the open space areas of the northern part of the County where substantial percolation does occur, water demand is so great that annual precipitation and spreading ground operations are not sufficient to recharge the basins.

In an effort to mitigate groundwater depletion, water agencies throughout the County have developed strategies to artificially recharge groundwater. One strategy purchases imported water or utilizes recycled water and injects it back into the water basins. Another strategy diverts imported water to designated spreading grounds, where it can percolate back into the water basins. In an effort to reduce imported water supplies, the County also diverts some of its treated stormwater into spreading grounds to replenish the groundwater supply.

#### Groundwater Pollution

Because approximately one-third of the County's local water supply is drawn from groundwater basins, the quality of this water source is critical. Contamination from past



Stream With Concrete Slabs

industrial and agricultural practices, saltwater intrusion, urban runoff and leaking from contaminated underground storage tanks has decreased useable groundwater supplies throughout the County. Federal and state agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency and Regional Water Quality Control Boards are working to improve the quality of groundwater by identifying contaminants, initiating clean up efforts and bringing enforcement actions against polluters. To reduce pollution in the future, each city and the County of Los Angeles are implementing water pollution prevention programs appropriate for their jurisdiction.

#### Recycled Water

Recycled water is used primarily for recharging groundwater aquifers through spreading operations and injection at seawater barriers. Other uses of recycled water include irrigation of landscaping, most commonly in parks, golf courses, and for roadway medians; supplying industrial processes, such as cooling and transportation, washing, and rinsing; filling artificial and decorative ponds and lakes; and flushing toilets in large, non-residential buildings.



LA County Flood Control Districts Dam and Recharge Area

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Los Angeles River

The County Sanitation Districts operate reclamation plants throughout the County and are the largest producers of recycled water. Other producers of recycled water include the cities of Burbank, Glendale, Los Angeles, Santa Monica, and the Central, Las Virgenes, and West Water districts. Three of these plants in the southern part of the County are capable of delivering over 50,000 acre-feet of treated water each year to spreading grounds and injection wells to combat salt-water intrusion into groundwater basins from the Pacific Ocean. In the Antelope Valley, recycled water is used for agriculture and supports large bird populations at Piute Ponds.

### **Water Conservation**

Conservation is a critical component of water resource management and is, in effect, another way to create additional water supply. Voluntary conservation measures by industries and residents have been successful in the past, particularly with regard to outdoor water use. Two-thirds of residential water use is attributed to landscape maintenance, which makes conservation measures such as planting drought-tolerant, indigenous plants (a practice known as xeriscaping), an important component of conservation policy.

The conservation of the County's water supply is a primary goal of local and County officials. To reduce the County's dependence on imported water, County agencies are establishing various conservation programs to

address this significant policy issue. One example from the Department of Public Works is the creation of water reclamation projects and groundwater recharge facilities to capture stormwater runoff. In the year 2000 alone, County conservation efforts captured 220,000 acre-feet of local stormwater runoff that was valued at \$80 million dollars.

In addition to stormwater runoff, the General Plan supports conservation efforts that focus on curbing demand by reducing consumption through technological advances, such as aerators and motion sensors on low flush toilets and stalls, on-site grey water reclamation and dual plumbing, and promoting xeriscaping. At the same time, educational campaigns are being created to discourage wasteful water consumption. While current water supply is adequate, better water management and conservation efforts are necessary to stretch the available supply if the County is to accommodate future growth. There are several policies in this General Plan that were created to promote water conservation efforts throughout the County.

### **Impaired Water Bodies**

Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to identify and establish a list of water bodies for which technology-based effluent limitations required by section 301 of the CWA are not stringent enough to attain and maintain applicable water quality standards. These water bodies on the 303(d) list are termed "impaired water bodies". For each water quality limited segments of water bodies identified in the 303(d) list, states are required to develop what is called "total maximum daily load (TMDL)", which is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still attain water quality standards. The pollution above that maximum has to be "budgeted" by allocating it among the various sources of the pollutant in order to regain the beneficial uses of the water body.

The majority of the water bodies in Los Angeles County, including rivers, lakes, coastal estuaries, bays, and beaches are in violation of the CWA and are placed on the 303(d) list. More than a dozen of different pollutants including



metals, nutrients, bacteria, organics, pesticides, trash, and other contaminants are found in the County's water bodies in amounts significantly above established water quality standards.

### **TMDL Implementation Plan**

The TMDL Implementation Plan provides a schedule for responsible jurisdictions to implement systems, programs, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to comply with progressive pollutant reduction schedules. More than 35 TMDLs are expected to be established in Los Angeles County by 2012. As of March 2008, about 15 TMDLs are already in effect, and the rest are being developed by the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board. The development of each TMDL results in an amendment of the Basin Plan, and subsequent inclusion into the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit program. The County recognizes the impact that urbanization has caused on our water resources and the environment, and is seriously engaged in taking actions to mitigate the problems.

### **Water Quality**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found that close to 218 million Americans live within 10 miles of a polluted lake, stream, river, or coastline, and most of Los Angeles County falls within this category. The cost of cleaning polluted water bodies is significant. Water quality regulation and implementation programs are beginning



Polluted Waterways

to make a difference, but without major public awareness and behavioral changes, the clean up process will remain an ongoing challenge.

The Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act) mandates that states develop water quality programs to protect the nation's water supply. In the State of California, this responsibility rests with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and its nine (9) Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). Statewide policies and regulations are set by the SWRCB and then implemented by the RWQCBs through Water Quality Control Plans, also known as Basin Plans.

### **Regional Water Quality Control Boards**

Two regional water quality control boards work with the County and local water purveyors to achieve the objectives set forth in their Basin Plans. The Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Board monitors most of the County, with the exception of the Antelope Valley, which is monitored by the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Board.

Basin Plans identify water pollutants and impaired stream courses in an effort to reduce illness in humans, destruction of riparian and marine habitats, and the loss of local tax revenue as a result of decreased tourism and increased remediation costs. Management of pollutants is set forth within the Basin Plan under NPDES.

### **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)**

In 1987, an amendment to the Clean Water Act effectively prohibited the discharge of pollutants to waters of the United States from stormwater, unless such discharge is in compliance with a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. The NPDES is a permitting program that established a framework for regulating municipal, industrial, and construction stormwater discharges into surface water bodies and stormwater channels.

The Los Angeles and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Boards are responsible for implementing the federally mandated NPDES program in the County through the adoption of an Order, which is effectively the NPDES Permit for that region. The Los Angeles Regional Board's Permit designates 84 cities within the Board's region as permittees, and the County of Los Angeles as the Principal Permittee of the NPDES Permit. The NPDES Permit defines the responsibilities of each permittee to control pollutants, including

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the adoption and enforcement of local ordinances and monitoring programs. The principle permittee is responsible for coordinating activities to comply with the requirements set forth in the Permit, but is not responsible for ensuring compliance of any other permittee. The County's Stormwater Ordinance requires that the discharge, deposit, or disposal of any stormwater and/or runoff to storm drains must be covered by a NPDES permit.

For the unincorporated areas of the County, in accordance with the NPDES Permit, the County implements a Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP) at the project-site level to address pollutants generated by specific activities and types of development. The main purpose of this planning program is to identify new construction and redevelopment projects that could contribute to stormwater pollution, and to mitigate run-off from those projects by requiring that certain Best Management Practices be implemented during and after construction. Moreover, the SUSMP prevents erosion by controlling runoff rates, protecting natural slopes and channels, and conserving natural areas.

Further information on the county's two (2) Regional Water Quality Control Boards and their NPDES programs can be found on the State of California Environmental Protection Agency website, located at <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb4/> (Los Angeles) and <http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb6/> (Lahontan).

## Watershed Resources

A watershed is an area or region that, by its land characteristics, contributes to the flow of water, sediments, and dissolved materials from the land into a common river, lake, groundwater basin, ocean, or other water body. A watershed encompasses all interrelated functions of the water cycle, surface flow, soil movement, vegetation, and wildlife occurring in a land area that is naturally bounded by mountain ridgelines. It is a vast undertaking to analyze the health of watersheds. However, individual watersheds are monitored to better understand the connections between their natural functions and human activities.

## Watershed Management

Watershed management is a comprehensive approach to effectively protect and restore a watershed's natural resources and water quality, particularly the biological function of riparian habitat and aquatic systems. Watershed management integrates flood protection with water quality and conservation, and preserves existing open space for habitat and recreation.

Because a watershed encompasses many jurisdictions, water quality and natural resource issues are best managed at a regional or watershed level. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Works has taken a leading role in engaging local stakeholders and jurisdictions in an effort to generate partnerships, collaborate with educational and professional institutions, and develop and implement Watershed Master Plans throughout the County. These plans incorporate measures to maintain flood protection standards and provide

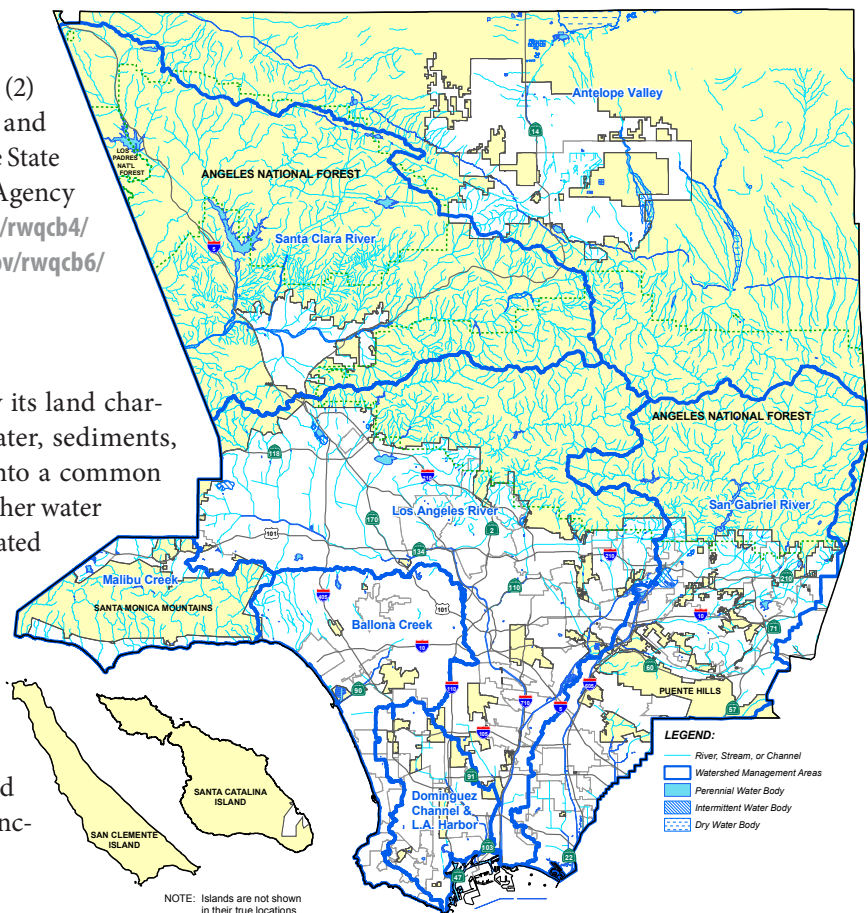


Figure 6.9: Significant Watersheds in L.A. County

assistance in the event of flooding, encourage watershed management practices, and improve the quality of water that flows to rivers, lakes, and the ocean.

### Watershed Impacts

The General Plan recognizes the importance of utilizing a watershed-based planning approach. Rivers, streams, and other drainage courses can be greatly affected by land use planning within the watershed. The specific issues impacting water bodies within each watershed should be taken into consideration, including pollutants of concern, TMDLs, natural ecology, and potential for hydromodification.

### Hydromodification

Hydromodification is one of the leading sources of impairment in streams, lakes, estuaries, aquifers, and other water bodies in the United States. Three major types of hydromodification activities, channelization and channel modification, dams, and stream bank and shoreline erosion, change a water body's physical structure as well as its natural function. These changes can cause problems such as changes in flow, increased sedimentation, higher water temperature, lower dissolved oxygen, degradation of aquatic habitat structure, loss of fish and other aquatic populations, and decreased water quality. It is important to properly manage hydromodification activities to reduce non-point source pollution in surface and ground water. The County is currently working on new standards which will address hydromodification impacts to natural streams.

### Los Angeles County Watersheds

There are several major watersheds, comprised of many sub-watersheds, in Los Angeles County, as shown in **Figure 6.9**. The Technical Appendix to the General Plan contains a thorough discussion of the following watersheds:

- Los Angeles River Watershed;
  - Dominguez Channel Sub-Watershed
- San Gabriel River Watershed;
- Santa Monica Bay Watershed;
  - Malibu Creek Sub-Watershed;
  - Ballona Creek Sub-Watershed;
- Santa Clara River Watershed; and,
- Antelope-Fremont Valleys Watershed.

The goals and policies which apply to water resources are:

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal C/OS-13

A protected supply of water resources.

- **Policy C/OS 13.1:** Comply with requirements of adopted Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, General Construction, and point source NPDES permits.
- **Policy C/OS 13.2:** Full compliance of NPDES stormwater permit requirements.
- **Policy C/OS 13.3:** Full compliance with all approved TDML implementation and compliance plans for impaired water bodies.
- **Policy C/OS 13.4:** Strictly manage the use of septic systems, especially adjacent to water bodies.
- **Policy C/OS 13.5:** All development activities should be discouraged from encroaching on the 100-year floodplain, and regulated to ensure the safety of County residents in the 200-year floodplain.

### Implementation Action C/OS 13.1

Create a floodplain management ordinance that adequately protects floodplains from the encroachment by development, preserves natural recharge areas, and allows passive recreation along the County's waterways.

### Implementation Action C/OS 13.2

Prepare Watershed and River Master Plans to enhance aquatic habitats, promote recreational opportunities, and restore natural features.

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# Chapter 7

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## I. INTRODUCTION

First adopted by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) in 1974, the Noise Element sets the goals and policy direction for the management of noise in Los Angeles County. California planning law obligates the County to prepare a noise element that identifies and appraises noise issues in the County's unincorporated communities. The purpose of the Noise Element is to limit the exposure of the general public to excessive noise levels. This Element includes:

- A general discussion of noise and the noise environment of the County;
- A discussion of how noise affects the residents and businesses of the County;
- The regulations and noise standards for the County; and,
- The goals and policies to regulate and mitigate noise concerns.

## II. DEFINING AND MEASURING NOISE

Unacceptable noise levels have a significant impact on the overall quality of life in the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. As a public policy issue, excessive levels of noise result in increased neighborhood annoyance, dissatisfaction, and declining property values. Due to the County's geographic, environmental, and cultural diversity, the levels and types of noise issues vary significantly throughout the County.

### The Noise Environment

The typical community noise environment is made up of background or "ambient" noise and other higher, "intrusive" levels of noise. These levels frequently emanate from

what are considered to be the major sources of noise. In unincorporated areas of the County the major sources of noise come from the various transportation systems that operate throughout the County; commercial and private airports, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's (Metro) rail and bus networks, and the extensive freeway and highway system of the region. Other major sources of noise have historically been identified with industrial uses, such as manufacturing plants, and barking dogs

### Noise Measurement

Sound and noise are often described in qualitative terms, and individuals differ greatly on what noises are considered pleasant or annoying. Therefore, putting quantitative measurements on noise effects is quite technical. Basic levels of noise measurement referred to in this Element include:

- **Decibels (dB):** Refers to the strength of a sound as dependent on the pressure exerted by sound waves (in other words, the greater the pressure, the louder the sound);
- **Frequency:** Refers to sounds that are produced by rapidly or slow vibrating objects;
- **"Community Noise Equivalent Level" (CNEL):** Provides a range of measurement for community noise levels that range from 30 decibels (very quiet) to 100 decibels (very loud); and,
- **"Day-Night Average Level" (DNL):** Refers to the aggregate of numerous single noise events to generate an average or composite sound level.

### Effects of Noise on People

Excessive noise can pose a serious public health problem and is one of the most widespread environmental pollutants affecting County communities. **Table 7.1** lists disturbances

from excessive noise that range from minor sleep annoyance to potential hearing loss. Sensitive receptors to noise, such as children or the elderly, are at particularly high risk of being affected by excessive noise levels. The County recognizes the importance of alleviating noise for public health purposes, and the General Plan Noise Element creates a framework to reduce or prevent excessive levels of noise for all residents in the County.

### III. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

#### Noise Level Standards

All levels of government have responsibilities for exercising control to mitigate the annoyances caused by noise. The following section outlines the noise level standards set by federal, state, and County regulations.

#### Federal Regulations

The adverse impact of noise was officially recognized by the federal government in the Noise Control Act of 1972, which serves three purposes:

1. Promulgating noise emission standards for interstate commerce;
2. Assisting state and local abatement efforts; and,
3. Promoting noise education and research.

The Federal Office of Noise Abatement and Control (ONAC) was initially tasked with implementing the Noise Control Act. However, the ONAC has since been eliminated, leaving the development of federal noise policies and programs to other federal agencies and interagency committees. For example, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) agency prohibits exposure of workers to excessive sound levels. The Department of Transportation (DOT) assumed a significant role in noise control through its various operating agencies, such as with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which regulates noise generated by aircraft and airports. Surface transportation system noise

**Table 7.1: Sources and Effects of Common Noise Levels**

Decibels	Effects	Observation	Source
130	Hearing Loss	Pain Threshold	Hard Rock Band Thunder
120		Deafening	
110			Jet Take-Off
100			Loud Auto Horn at 10 ft.
90		Very loud	Noisy City Street
85			School Cafeteria
80			
75			
70	Physiological Effects	Loud	Vacuum Cleaner at 10 ft.
65			Normal Speech at 3 ft.
60	Interference with Speech		
55			
50	Sleep Interruption	Moderately Loud	Average Office Dishwasher in Next Room
45			Soft Radio Music Quiet Residential Area
40	Sleep Disturbance		
35		Average Whisper at 6 ft.	
30		Rustle of Leaves in Wind	
20		Very Faint	Human Breathing
10			
5		Audibility Threshold	
0			

Source: Compilation of scientific and academic literature, generated by FHWA and EPA

is regulated by a host of agencies, including the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which requires that all rail systems receiving federal funding be constructed and operated in accordance with its regulations and specifications. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) sets forth and enforces safety standards, including noise emissions within railroad locomotive cabs. Transit noise is regulated by the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration (UMTA), while freeways that are a part of the interstate highway system are regulated by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The FHWA has adopted and promulgated noise abatement criteria for highway construction projects. Finally, the federal government actively advocates that local jurisdictions use their land use regulatory authority to arrange new development in such a way that “noise sensitive” uses are either prohibited from being sited adjacent to a highway

or, alternately, that the developments are planned and constructed in such a manner that potential noise impacts are minimized.

Since the Federal government has pre-empted the setting of standards for noise levels that can be emitted by transportation sources, the County is restricted to regulating the noise generated by the transportation system through nuisance abatement ordinances and land use planning. These are discussed further under County Regulations.

### State Regulations

One major identified source of excessive noise is airports. Title 21 of the California Code of Regulations establishes maximum acceptable levels of aircraft noise for persons living in the vicinity of airports. The maximum exposure level around airports that the State believes is compatible with residences, schools, hospitals, and places of worship is 65 dB CNEL. Noise contours for all public use airports within the County are found in **Figure 7.1**, and in the County's Airport Land Use Plan adopted by the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) in 1991, available on the Department of Regional Planning's website at <http://planning.lacounty.gov/spALUC.htm>.

Title 21 also requires each county in California with public use airports to establish an ALUC. The ALUC is mandated to fulfill two specific duties:

- To prepare airport land use plans for promoting and ensuring compatibility between each airport in a county and its surrounding and adjacent land uses; and,
- To review local agency land use actions and airport plans for consistency with the airport land use plan and policies.

In Los Angeles County, the Regional Planning Commission (RPC) serves as the ALUC and is responsible for protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the public. They do this by ensuring the orderly development of airports and the

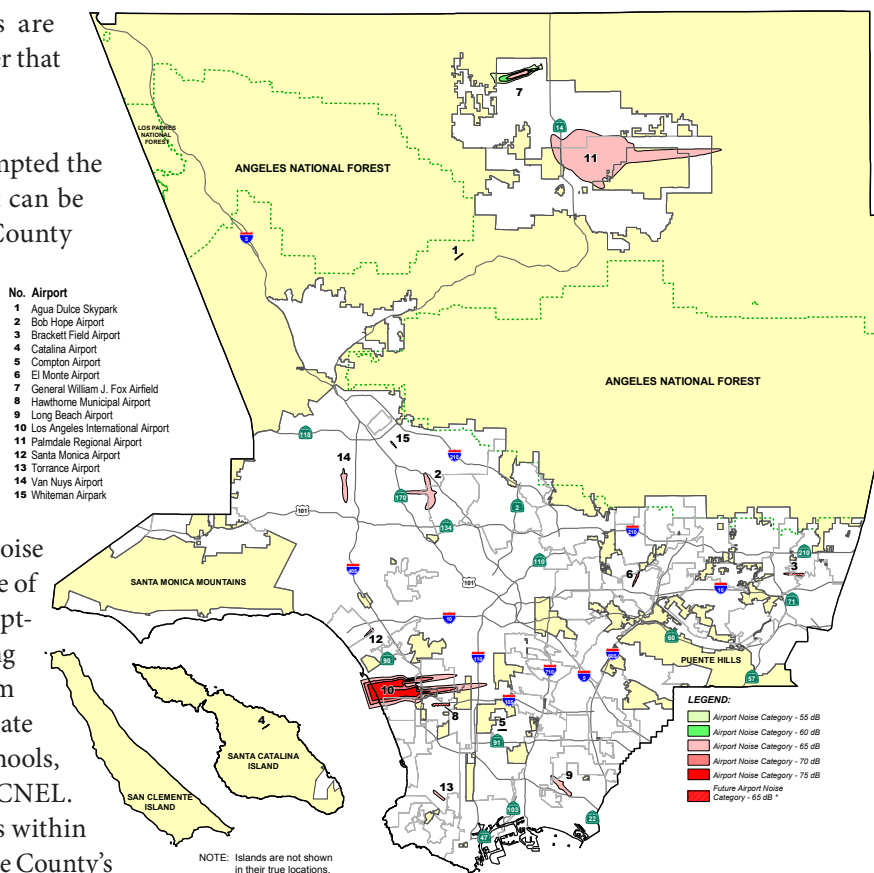


Figure 7.1: L.A. County Airport Noise Contours

adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within areas around public use airports.

The ALUC prepares the land use compatibility plan called the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP), which must include an evaluation of noise as a primary component. The County's 1991 CLUP contains 65dB CNEL noise exposure contours for each airport.

Additional state regulatory codes related to noise abatement include:

- **Uniform Building Code:** Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations requires certain noise insulation measures to be used in the design of all new residential construction other than detached, single-family dwellings;
- **Vehicle Code:** Establishes maximum noise levels for motor vehicles; and,
- **California Code of Regulations:** Establishes maximum acceptable levels of aircraft noise.

The California Department of Health Service's Office of Noise Control (ONC), established in 1973, was instrumental in developing regulatory tools to control and abate noise for use by local agencies. One significant model is the "Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments Matrix", which allows a local jurisdiction to clearly delineate compatibility of sensitive uses with various incremental levels of noise. The County has adapted this State matrix to develop the County's exterior noise standards, as seen in **Table 7.2**.

### County Regulations

The County is chiefly involved in maintaining the health and welfare of its residents in respect to noise through nuisance abatement ordinances and land use planning. The County Noise Control Ordinance, Title 12 of the County Code, was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1977 "...to control unnecessary, excessive, and annoying noise and vibration ...." It declared that County policy was to "...maintain quiet in those areas which exhibit low noise levels and to implement programs aimed at reducing noise in those areas within the county where noise levels are above acceptable values" (Section 12.08.010 of the County Code).

**Table 7.2: L.A. County Exterior Noise Standards**

Noise Zone	Designated Noise Zone Land Use (Receptor Property)	Time Interval	Exterior Noise Level (dB)
I	Noise-sensitive area, designated to ensure exceptional quiet	Anytime	45
II	Residential properties, zoned as such in the County Code Title 22	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	45
		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	50
III	Commercial properties, zoned as such in the County Code Title 22	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. (nighttime)	55
		7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (daytime)	60
IV	Industrial properties, zoned as such in the County Code Title 22	Anytime	70

Source: Section 12.08.390 of L.A. County Code (a portion of the Noise Control Ordinance)

On August 14, 2001, the Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance amending Title 12 of the County Code to prohibit loud, unnecessary, and unusual noise that disturbs the peace and/or quiet of any neighborhood or which causes discomfort or annoyance to any reasonable person of normal sensitivity residing in the area. Regulations can include requirements for sound barriers, mitigation measures to reduce excessive noise, or the placement and orientation of buildings, and can specify the compatibility of different uses with varying noise levels, as shown in **Table 7.2**.



Airport Traffic, Lennox Community

In addition to the countywide noise ordinance, many communities address noise concerns in their individual area or community plans. For more information on these plans and their respective noise control measures, please refer to the Department of Regional Planning's (DRP) website under Land Use and Zoning Information at <http://planning.co.la.ca.us/luz.htm>.

### Community Attitudes about Noise

The County has conducted two surveys to assess the subjective noise annoyance factor in unincorporated communities. In compliance with the County Noise Ordinance, the County Health Department's Environmental



Hygiene Program performed noise complaint assessments for a four-year period from 1996 through 1999. During this period, the Health Department responded to a total of 111 noise complaints under its statutory authority.

The Department of Regional Planning conducted General Plan Workshops around the County to discuss community concerns and generate feedback for the General Plan update process. The workshops revealed that in terms of noise, both urban and rural communities experience neighborhood disturbances such as barking dogs, leaf blowers, garbage trucks, buses, and motorcycles. Urban residential areas seemed to be affected by commercial and industrial spillover noise, such as trucks making late night deliveries at neighborhood shopping centers. Virtually all communities objected to noise generated by freeways and major arterials. All communities also reacted to aircraft noise to some extent, with the strongest reaction from those whose homes and businesses lie beneath the flight path of major airports. The General Plan Noise Element incorporated the feedback from these various “Issue Workshops”, and used them in formulating the County’s goals and policies on noise regulation.

## IV. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The goals and policies which apply to noise regulation are:

### Goal N-1

An environment that is protected from unacceptable levels of noise.

- **Policy N 1.1:** Ensure the compatibility of land uses throughout the County to minimize the exposure to excessive noise levels.
- **Policy N 1.2:** Employ effective noise abatement measures to achieve acceptable levels of noise as defined by the Los Angeles County Exterior Noise Standards.
- **Policy N 1.3:** Ensure cumulative impacts related to noise do not exceed excessive levels.

#### *Implementation Action N 1.1*

Identify significant noise issues in the County and create a working project list. Examples will include the need for sound walls and noise barriers, buffering, etc. This list can be used to identify funding sources and for grant applications.

# Chapter 8

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Safety Element is to reduce the potential risk of death, injuries, and economic damage resulting from natural and man-made hazards. The Los Angeles County Safety Element addresses the following issues:

- **Natural hazards**, including seismic hazards, geologic hazards, flood and inundation hazards, and wildland and urban fire hazards.
- **Man-made hazards**, such as terrorism; bio-terrorism, and hazardous materials management.
- **County emergency and safety response services.**

## II. BACKGROUND

The Safety Element assesses public health and safety threats from a variety of hazards, and it recommends strategies to reduce those threats. Local jurisdictions have a degree of discretion in tailoring the Safety Element to their particular concerns. As such, the serious threat of earthquakes to Los Angeles County has influenced the emphasis on earthquake-induced hazards in the General Plan. Fortunately, many actions that reduce the risk from earthquakes also contribute to the reduction of risks from fire, flood, and other geologic hazards.

Included in this Safety Element are a discussion of local conditions and the incorporation of seismic hazard zone maps published by the California Department of Conservation, California Geological Survey, as required by the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990. These maps provide local government with an additional tool for identifying potential locations where the risks of damage to structures as a result of seismic events may be significant and life threatening. In

addition to detailing provisions related to natural hazard issues, the matter of emergency preparedness in the face of disasters and the potential for subsequent man-made hazards is addressed in this element of the General Plan.

The Safety Element provides guidance through policies and actions that can produce a safer environment. It is specifically designed to present public officials with suitable policies for decisions regarding regulations, programs, and projects that further public safety and assist County agencies in meeting their public safety responsibilities. The threat of natural and man-made hazards to the County can never be totally eliminated. The implementation of the Safety Element, however, can significantly reduce the magnitude of impacts from a variety of future disaster events.

### Existing Setting

Los Angeles County is the center of the largest population concentration on the Pacific Coast, and is a key industrial, commercial, economic, and cultural center served by an extensive transportation, housing, and industrial infrastructure network.

Growth patterns in the County have seen the intensification of land uses throughout urban areas, and the extension of development into areas with environmental hazards, such as fragile hillsides, floodplains, and forests. This continued pattern of growth will further increase the vulnerability of the County to seismic, geologic, flood, and fire hazards. The County recognizes the need to maintain prudent land use, hazard abatement, and risk management programs.

It is the County's responsibility to identify hazardous conditions that expose the public to unacceptable levels of risk, and to cooperate with government agencies and the public-at-large to reduce risks to tolerable levels. Tolerable

### Development Guidelines for projects in Seismic Hazard Areas

In addition to all of the requirements outlined in the Los Angeles County Building Code, the following guidelines apply to projects that are located within a Seismic Hazard Area as indicated on the Seismic Hazards Map (Figure 8.1):

1. A geology report, prepared by a registered geologist, shall be submitted to the appropriate local agency for review prior to approval of a proposed development within a Seismic Hazard Area.
2. No structure for human occupancy shall be constructed within 50 feet of an active fault trace (specific exceptions include individually constructed, wood frame, single family residences and mobile homes).
3. Applications for zoning or tentative subdivision approval or renewal shall be submitted to the County Engineer for review. On the basis of this review, the County Engineer shall determine the necessity for additional geologic data, and establish such conditions for development as may be appropriate.
4. The following uses shall be prohibited in Seismic Zones: emergency response facilities including sheriff and fire stations; vital facilities including hospitals and major utility and communications installations; and facilities for dependent populations, including but not limited to, schools, day care centers, convalescent homes, institutions for the physically and mentally handicapped, and high security correctional institutions.

levels of risk are achieved through compliance with county, state, and federal safety standards and policies. The County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) provides leadership and inter-departmental emergency coordination, and it is the County's liaison to state and federal safety agencies. The County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) responds to both natural disasters and those related to terrorism.

## III. NATURAL HAZARDS

The following sections discuss the identified natural hazards and risks to the unincorporated areas of the County.

### Seismic Hazards

Since 1800, over 90 significant earthquakes have jolted the Los Angeles region. Within the County itself, there are over 50 active and potentially active fault segments, an undetermined number of buried faults, and at least four (4) blind-thrust faults capable of producing damaging earthquakes. Figure 8.1, the Los Angeles County Seismic Hazards Map, shows the fault lines that run through the County, and details seismic, liquefaction, and landslide zones.

Earthquakes present a multitude of potentially dangerous consequences that can include ground rupture, ground failure, and landslides. In addition, flooding of low-lying coastal areas could result from a tsunami generated by a large offshore earthquake or submarine slide. Widespread and localized earthquake-induced effects place structures or utility corridors at risk that, if damaged, could result in fires, failure of large dams, or the release of toxic, flammable, or explosive materials.

A catastrophic earthquake would severely strain the emergency response and recovery capabilities of federal, state, and local governments, and profoundly impact the regional and state economy. Several policies address safety measures to reduce the risks from a potential earthquake in the County.

### Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 was created to prohibit the location of most structures for human occupancy across the traces of active faults, thus lessening the hazard of fault rupture. Los Angeles County development complies with all aspects of the Alquist-Priolo Act. The three main provisions are to:

- Require the California Geological Survey to implement maps of the surface traces of known active faults, including both the best known location where faults cut the surface and a buffer zone around the known trace(s);



- Require property owners (or their real estate agents) to disclose that their property lies within identified hazard zones; and,
- Prohibit new construction of projects as defined by the Alquist-Priolo Act within these identified hazard zones until a comprehensive geological study has been completed.

The following general standards and conditions for development in seismic zones will apply in all unincorporated areas, and may be expanded and elaborated upon by local-level plans.

### Liquefaction and Landslides

In 1990, the California State Legislature passed the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act requiring the California Geological Survey to prepare new Seismic Hazard Zone Maps showing areas where earthquake-induced liquefaction or landslides have historically occurred, or where there is a high potential for such occurrences. The purpose of the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act is to protect the public from the effects of strong ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, and other ground failure, as well as other hazards caused by earthquakes. **Figure 8.1**, the Los Angeles County Seismic Hazards Map, shows the liquefaction and landslide risks for the County.

In addition to fault traces and seismic zones, the two (2) additional categories on the Seismic Hazards Map are liquefaction and landslide zones:

- **Liquefaction:** Liquefaction is a process by which water-saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state during strong ground shaking; and,
- **Earthquake-Induced Landslides:** A landslide is a general term for a falling, sliding, or flowing mass of soil, rocks, water, and debris.

### Geologic Hazards

More than 50 percent of unincorporated Los Angeles County is comprised of hilly or mountainous terrain, and development pressure is projected to continue in these geologically sensitive areas. Hillside hazards are identified as a major problem throughout the County. Mud and debris

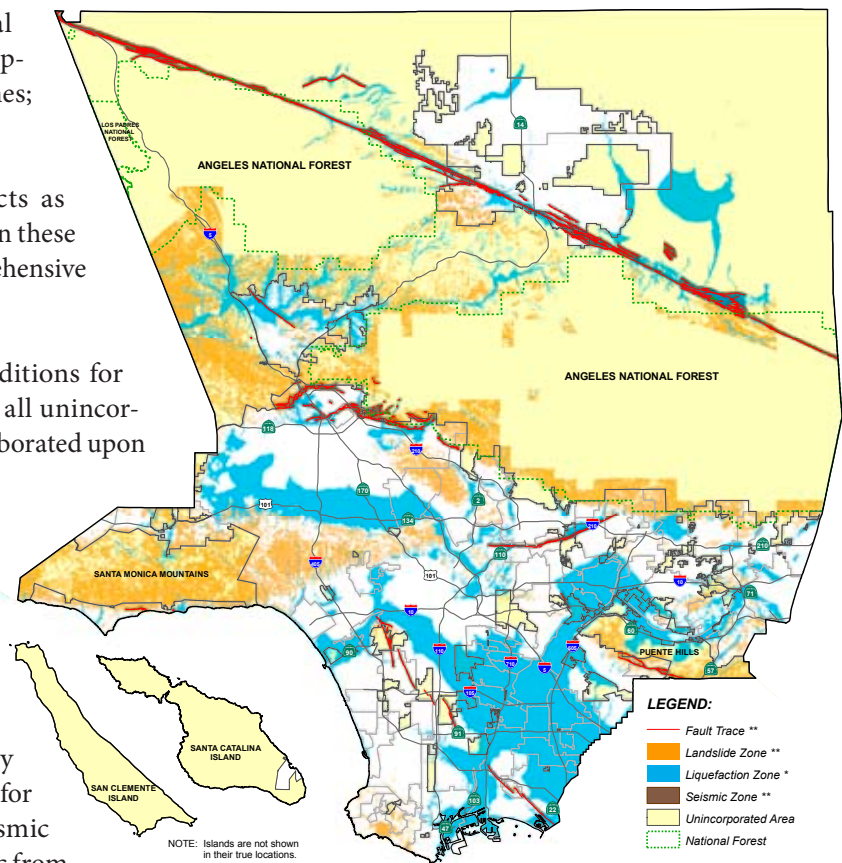


Figure 8.1: L.A. County Seismic Hazards Map

flows, active deep-seated landslides, hillside erosion, and man-induced slope instability comprise the vast majority of hillside hazards and create both pre-development and post-development problems. These geologic hazards include artificially saturated or rainfall-saturated slopes, the erosion and undercutting of slopes, earthquake-induced rock falls and shallow failures, and natural or artificial compaction of unstable ground. While the elimination of all losses from geologic hazards is unrealistic, the County actively works to limit the occurrence of large-scale losses through regulation and development standards.

### Flood and Inundation Hazards

Flooding in the County can be earthquake-induced or can result from intense rainfall. Although the likelihood for the catastrophic inundation of low-lying coastal areas of the County by tsunamis is considered relatively low, the risk of losing the vital commerce associated with the Los Angeles/Long Beach Harbor warrants adequate risk reduction measures. As such, the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles



Big Tujunga Dam

have completed a *Tsunami Hazard Assessment* to guide disaster planning and mitigate damage from a potential tsunami at their facilities.

The significant commercial, residential, and public investment in unincorporated Marina del Rey is also at risk. Inundation caused by a catastrophic dam or aqueduct failure could devastate large areas of the County and threaten many residences and businesses. Two (2) dam failures and one (1) near failure have occurred in the County since 1928. Frequently occurring, intense storm events have also caused mudflow and flood hazards involving the destruction of property, injuries, and deaths. **Figure 8.2** shows the County's flood zone areas. Detailed descriptions of the County's development standards in flood zone areas are contained in the Safety Element in the *Technical Appendix* to the General Plan.

The following general standards and conditions for development in flood zones will apply in all unincorporated areas, and may be expanded and elaborated upon by local-level plans.

### Floodplain Management

Since October 1990, the County has been a voluntary participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) of the Federal

Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As a participant, the County is responsible for the regulation of development in special flood hazard areas of the County and the planning for other floodplain management activities that will promote and encourage programs for the preservation and restoration of the natural state of the floodplain. As a compliance requirement of the National Flood Insurance Program, the County enforces regulations of these developments to ensure that buildings are erected at a safe elevation to prevent potential damages to properties.

The County provides information regarding flood zone designations from FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps to property owners for use in resolving flood insurance issues with their respective insurance companies and lending institutions. The County has developed a flood zone website for use by the general public to access this information at [www.dpw.lacounty.gov/apps/wmd/floodzone](http://www.dpw.lacounty.gov/apps/wmd/floodzone).

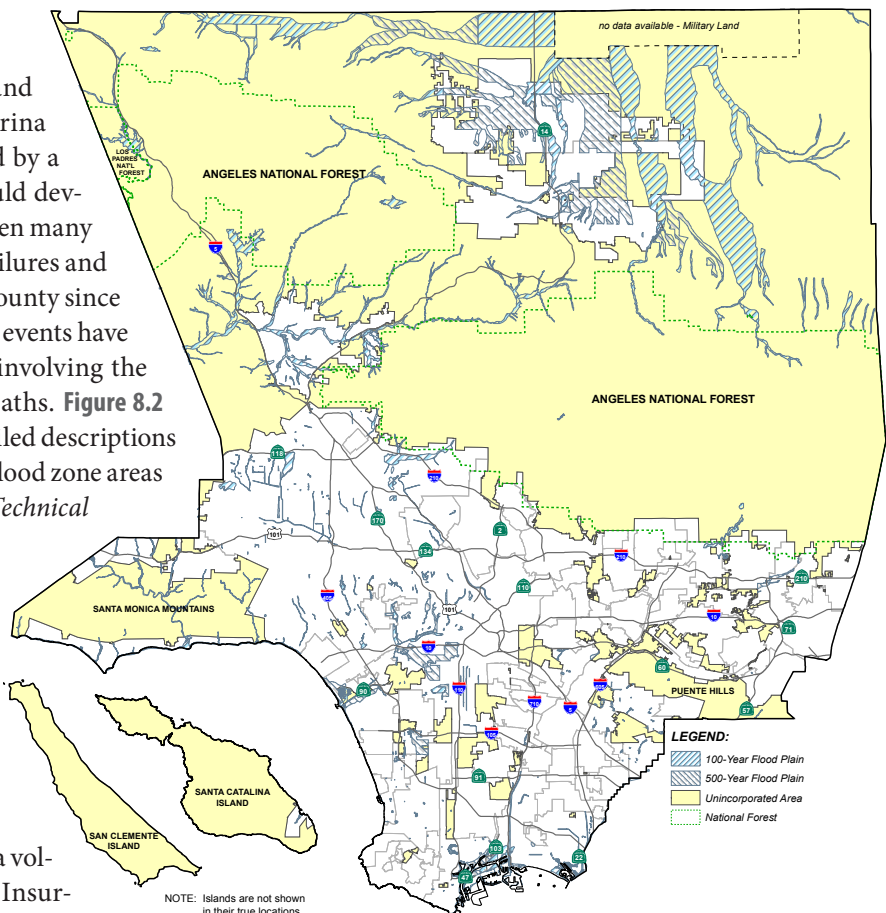


Figure 8.2: L.A. County Flood Zone Map



### Development Guidelines for projects in Flood Zones

The following guidelines apply to projects that are located within a Flood Zone as indicated on the Flood Zone map (Figure 8.2):

1. No permanent structures shall be constructed, altered, modified or enlarged within the boundaries of a flood zone, except: a) those accessory structures that will not impede the flow of water, and, b) flood control structures approved by the County Flood Control District.
2. Any development proposed within a flood zone area shall be reviewed by the County Engineer or Flood Control District who will define the area within which no permanent structures or improvements shall be permitted.
3. The scale, design, and intensity of any approved project in a flood zone must minimize exposure of current and future community residents to flood related property damage and loss.
4. Any proposed project in a flood zone must be consistent with density and use standards set forth in the General Plan or applicable local-level plan, and must be compatible with the character of surrounding development.
5. Any proposed project in a flood zone must be situated and designed so as to avoid isolation from essential services and facilities in the event of flooding.
6. The costs associated with on and off-site hazard mitigation, including design, construction, and continued maintenance of necessary flood protection facilities will be assumed by the developer and/or future owners, occupants, or residents of the proposed development.

The Flood Maintenance Division of the Department of Public Works (DPW) is responsible for operating and maintaining flood control and water conservation facilities. These facilities include fifteen (15) major dams, 284 debris basins, 450 miles of storm drain channel, 2,500 miles of drains, 33 pump plants, 30 spreading grounds covering 1,989 acres, and 22 miles of barrier projects that prevent the intrusion of seawater into the fresh water supply. The Flood Maintenance Division is also responsible for implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to meet the permit requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). These BMPs include the inspection of all storm drains for illegal connections and discharges.

The County also conducts educational outreach programs to unincorporated communities on how to mitigate flooding impacts to their properties. The County seeks to reduce the flood insurance cost for residents who are required to purchase flood insurance by taking actions which lower the community rating system number.

The County restricts development within floodplains. Any development within the floodplain cannot increase the flood hazard to adjacent properties by increasing the capital flood water surface elevation, deflecting flows, or increasing the velocity of the flow such that it causes bank erosion. Developments in the floodplain must make provisions to avoid these impacts and eliminate inundation hazards by providing adequate drainage facilities through protective



Flood Damaged Road

walls, suitable fill, raising the floor level of the building, or a combination of these methods. The County also requires compliance with FEMA regulations, including a maximum one (1) foot rise in water surface elevation of flood flows.

### Fire Hazards

Los Angeles County is subject to the threat from urban fires, and especially wildland fires, due to its hilly terrain, dry weather conditions, and the nature of its plant coverage. The Forestry Division of the Fire Department has designated woodland and brush areas with high fire potential as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. A variety of regulatory programs and standards are directed toward the abatement of this hazard and can be found on the Los Angeles County Fire Department's Forestry Division website at <http://fire.lacounty.gov/Forestry/Forestry.asp>. Figure 8.3 shows the areas of the County susceptible to very high fire hazards.

Due to the intensity of development, the number of the potentially affected populations, and the difficulties of containment, the County must also devote major resources to controlling potential fire hazards in its urban areas. Fire safety and suppression are especially critical in industrial areas and high-rise buildings. More information on the County's fire prevention and safety programs can be found on the Los Angeles County Fire Department's website, located at <http://fire.lacounty.gov>.

## IV. HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, HAZARDOUS WASTE, AND OTHER MAN-MADE HAZARDS

### Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste

As one of the nation's largest industrial centers, the County is vulnerable to the unauthorized releases of hazardous materials. The County is also a major producer of a wide variety of toxic, flammable, and explosive materials. An assortment of toxic materials are also stored and used in many small businesses and households throughout the County. Earthquakes, fires, and floods pose a threat to the possible release or explosion of hazardous materials.

The Safety Element addresses only limited aspects of hazardous waste and materials management, in particular, those aspects related to seismic events, fires, and floods. In general, hazardous materials management is more fully addressed in the *Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Plan* (California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 18755.5), which is adopted by reference in the General Plan.

### Other Man-Made Hazards

The Los Angeles region, regarded throughout the world as an economic, population, and cultural center, is a prime target for potential terrorist incidents. The County recognizes the need to address this growing safety concern throughout the County. Inter-jurisdictional cooperation is an important element in providing an effective system to provide a safe environment from man-made hazards like terrorism. The following sections discuss the services and agencies that comprise the safety systems for unincorporated areas of the County.

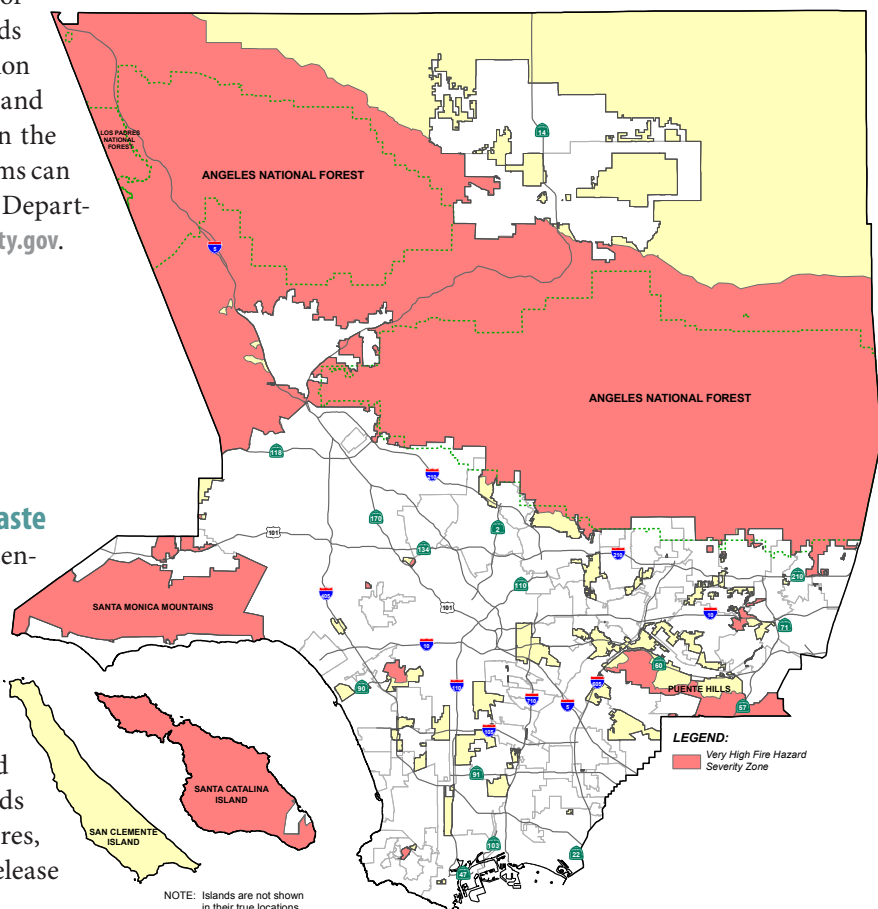


Figure 8.3: L.A. County Very High Fire Hazards Map



## V. PROTECTION AND RESPONSE

The Safety Element provides a policy framework for the implementation of short-range emergency preparedness plans to maintain long-term safety goals. This section describes the protection and response providers for the unincorporated areas of the County.

### Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

The Office of Emergency Management is responsible for organizing and directing the preparedness efforts of the Emergency Management Organization of Los Angeles County. The OEM is the day-to-day Los Angeles County Operational Area coordinator for the entire geographic area of the County. OEM's broad responsibilities include:

- **Planning and Coordination:**
  - Maintaining an approved Operational Area Emergency Response Plan (see following section); and,
  - Providing ongoing leadership and coordinating disaster plans and exercises with the 88 cities, 137 unincorporated communities and 288 special districts in the county.



Fire Station Response, Altadena



Hazardous Materials Team, Los Angeles County Fire Department

- **Operations:**
  - Maintaining the County Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) in a state of operational readiness, in partnership with the Sheriff's Emergency Operations Bureau;
  - Serving as on-call CEOC first responders on a 24-hour basis;
  - Providing an OEM duty officer on a 24-hour basis to address inquiries and concerns from County, local and state officials regarding potential or escalating emergency conditions; and,
  - Training and technical operations.
- **Public Education & Grants Administration:**
  - Maintaining a cadre of CEOC team members trained in section and position responsibilities and use of the Emergency Management Information System (EMIS); and,
  - Providing ongoing training for county Department Emergency Coordinators (DECs) and Building Emergency Coordinators (BECs).

### Operational Area Emergency Response Plan

The most crucial emergency response plan in the unincorporated areas of the County is the *Operational Area Emergency Response Plan* (OAERP), which is prepared by the Office of Emergency Management. The OAERP strengthens short and long-term emergency response and recovery capability, and identifies emergency procedures



Sheriff's Helicopter

### Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD)

The LASD is the largest sheriff's department in the world. In addition to specialized services, the LASD is divided into ten (10) divisions, each headed by a Division Chief. One of the newest divisions at LASD is the Office of Homeland Security, a proactive effort to enhance the Department's response to potential threats related to local homeland security issues, such as terrorism or bio-terrorism. The LASD is also covered in more detail in Chapter 9, the Public Service and Facilities Element. Further information on the LASD and the Office of Homeland Security can be found at the LASD's website at <http://www.lasd.org/>.

and emergency management routes in the County. The OAERP, along with more information on the OEM, can be found at the County's Chief Executive Office (CEO) website at <http://lacoa.org/>.

### Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD)

The LACFD is organized into nine (9) divisions throughout the unincorporated County. In 2005, the LACFD had 4,547 personnel, which includes 639 administrative personnel, and an extensive reserve of safety and fire-fighting equipment. Out of the 282,091 emergency operations in 2005, over 68% were rescues (193,454 incidents), with the other 88,637 incidents being fires (10,195) or classified as "other" (78,442).

The LACFD operates other divisions including Emergency Services, Forestry, and a Health Hazard Materials Division, whose mission is to "protect the public health and the environment throughout Los Angeles County from accidental releases and improper handling, storage, transportation, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes through coordinated efforts of inspections, emergency response, enforcement, and site mitigation oversight." The LACFD is covered in more detail in Chapter 9, the Public Service and Facilities Element. Further information on LACFD's programs and divisions can be found on its website at <http://fire.lacounty.gov/>.

### Hazard Mitigation Plan

The County, in conjunction with its many emergency services partners, has prepared a *Local All-Hazards Mitigation Plan* that sets strategies for coping with the natural and man-made hazards faced by residents. The plan is a compilation of information from County departments correlated with known and projected hazards that face southern California. The plan complies with, and has been approved by, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES). The plan has been formally adopted by the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) for use in the development of specific hazard mitigation proposals.

The County *Local All-Hazards Mitigation Plan* addresses potential damages in the unincorporated portions of the County, as well as to County facilities. Cities, schools, special districts, and eligible non-profit organizations within the County must prepare and submit separate Hazard Mitigation Plans to FEMA for approval. The Plan can be found on the CEO's website, located at <http://lacoa.org/hazmit.htm>.

## VI. GOALS, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The goals and policies which apply to safety are:

### Goal S-1

An effective regulatory system that prevents or minimizes personal injury, loss of life, and property damage due to natural or man-made disasters.

- **Policy S 1.1:** Enforce stringent site investigations for factors related to hazards.
- **Policy S 1.2:** Limit development in high hazard areas such as floodplains, high fire hazard areas, and seismic hazard zones.
- **Policy S 1.3:** Facilitate the safe transportation, use, and storage of hazardous materials in the County.
- **Policy S 1.4:** Encourage the reduction or elimination of the use of hazardous materials.
- **Policy S 1.5:** Support comprehensive lead paint abatement efforts.
- **Policy S 1.6:** Remediate brownfield sites to limit community exposure to potential toxins.
- **Policy S 1.7:** Encourage the purchase of homes on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Repeat Hazard List and designate the land as open space.
- **Policy S 1.8:** Prohibit and enforce restrictions on public access to important energy sites.
- **Policy S 1.9:** Limit development downslope from all aqueducts.
- **Policy S 1.10:** Promote safe, biodegradable alternatives to chemical-based products in households.
- **Policy S 1.11:** No development is allowed in County floodways, as defined in the County Code.

#### Implementation Action S 1.1

Research procuring funding sources to purchase at risk properties in hazard areas on FEMA's repeat hazards list.

### Goal S-2

Effective County emergency response management capabilities.

- **Policy S 2.1:** Support County emergency providers with reaching their response time goals.
- **Policy S 2.2:** Promote the participation and coordination of emergency response management between cities and other Counties at all levels of government.
- **Policy S 2.3:** Coordinate with other County and public agency emergency planning and response activities.
- **Policy S 2.4:** Encourage the development of an early warning system for tsunamis, floods and wildfires.

#### Implementation Action S 2.1

Work with the County to hold a Safety Fair for County employees.

#### Implementation Action S 2.2

Digitize all historical approved project files, legal documents and pertinent Departmental information that would be necessary to operate an emergency mobile Planning Office, in case the Hall of Records was inaccessible due to unexpected circumstances.

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# Chapter 9

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# PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Los Angeles County General Plan's Public Services and Facilities Element is intended to promote the orderly and efficient planning of public services as an important component of successful land use development and growth. The purpose of this element is to provide a summary of the public services and facilities that serve the County, and to establish a general set of policy goals that will guide public services in conjunction with the County's projected growth.

The Public Services and Facilities Element primarily focuses on services and facilities that are publicly managed and are the most impacted by County growth and development. The General Plan recognizes that as the County continues to develop, the demand for public services and facilities will also need to expand.

This element provides a framework for encouraging land use development and growth that is planned in conjunction with ensuring adequate public services and facilities. The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) will continue to support service providers by supplying project data that is necessary to determine the cumulative impacts of development on public services and facilities.

The Public Services and Facilities Element covers the following topics:

- Water;
- Wastewater (Sewer);
- Solid waste;
- Utilities and telecommunications;
- Fire;
- Police;
- Education; and,
- Libraries.

## Development Monitoring

In 1987, the Department of Regional Planning established a Development Monitoring System (DMS), which was a program to ensure that in quickly expanding areas, new development, public service infrastructure, and service capacity were closely monitored for inefficiencies. The DMS program monitored the expansion costs for schools, sewers, fire stations, libraries, and water services in Urban Expansion Areas, and ensured that from a planning perspective, services were expanded to meet future growth projections.

The General Plan no longer identifies Urban Expansion Areas, and many of the expansion costs for services are now covered by specific development fees and by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Therefore, the Department of Regional Planning no longer utilizes DMS. The special development fees that have replaced DMS are:

- **School Facilities Fee:** State of California Government Code, Section 53080;
- **Sewer Connection Mitigation Fee:** California Health Safety Code, Section 5474;
- **Fire Protection Facilities Fee:** Revenue & Finance Code, Title 4, Chapter 4.92; and,
- **Library Facilities Mitigation Fee:** Planning & Zoning Code, Title 22, Chapter 22.72.

The remaining service that was tracked by DMS is water, and since 1987, several State laws have been passed to ensure that there is an adequate water supply for new development. These include:

**SB 610:** Requires water purveyors to provide local governments with a Water Supply Assessment for large projects and criteria including:



Service Extensions Match Development

- Residential developments having more than 500 dwelling units;
- Shopping centers or businesses employing more than 1,000 employees or having more than 500,000 square feet of floor space;
- Commercial office buildings employing more than 1,000 employees or having more than 250,000 square feet of floor space;
- Hotels or motels having more than 500 rooms;
- Industrial, manufacturing, processing plants, or industrial parks housing more than 1,000 persons, is greater than 40 acres or having 650,000 square feet of floor space; and,
- Any project that increases a public water system that currently has less than 5,000 connections by 10%.

**SB 221:** Requires verification of sufficient water supply as a condition of approval for tentative maps for subdivisions with more than 500 dwelling units or proposed residential developments that increase a public water system that currently has less than 5,000 connections, by 10%.

**Urban Water Management Planning Act (1983):** Requires urban water suppliers that provide water to 3,000 or more customers or provide 3,000 acre-feet of water annually to adopt and implement Urban Water Management Plans (UWMP) to ensure there is sufficient water to meet the needs of customers during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

The Department of Regional Planning will continue to support service planning by making development data available to public service providers. The Public Services and Facilities Element provides an overview of the County's service providers and offers policy guidance for the continued coordination of development activities with service providers to ensure appropriate capacity of our service infrastructure. In addition, the County recognizes that to support sustainable public service infrastructure, development in isolated and hazardous areas must be limited or restricted.



Water Reliability Limits Development

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

The general goals and policies that apply to Public Services and Facilities are:

### Goal PS-1

A reliable and equitable network of public services and facilities throughout the County.

- **Policy PS 1.1:** Encourage the equitable distribution of public facilities throughout the County.
- **Policy PS 1.2:** Ensure the equitable distribution of community social services, such as child care, workforce training, and elder care.
- **Policy PS 1.3:** Promote phased development whereby beneficial public facilities such as schools, parks, fire protection, and law enforcement are developed in conjunction with land use proposals.
- **Policy PS 1.4:** Development should not occur in areas without adequate public services and facilities.
- **Policy PS 1.5:** Ensure impacts to County services are mitigated through impact fees or other programs.
- **Policy PS 1.6:** Support innovative public facility expansion efforts, such as substations or satellite offices in commercial developments.

#### Implementation Action PS 1.1

Study and evaluate the creation of a standardized mitigation fee to be placed on all development for the provision of all public services and facilities including parks, libraries, schools, sewers, water, stormwater management, transportation and police and fire protection.

#### Implementation Action PS 1.2

Implement a services demand database that incorporates subdivision activity data and other case data that can be used for services planning.

“We are rapidly building a new functional unit, the metropolitan region, but we have yet to grasp that this new unit, too, should have its corresponding image

–Kevin Lynch

## II. WATER

The County utilizes a complex water management system to provide a continuous supply of clean water for everyday uses, and there are numerous water providers, water control boards, and other agencies that ensure the effective implementation of this system. This section of the Public Services and Facilities Element focuses on the provision, management, and use of water in the County, and provides policy direction for the continued effective maintenance of our water supply system.

The County is very susceptible to any disruption in its water supply. For instance, a 2007 California court ruling to protect Delta Smelt, an endangered species in the Sacramento River Delta, reduced the water conveyed in the California State Water Project by 33 percent. This one event could have a potentially significant impact on the building and development activities in Los Angeles County. The need to conserve water, increase land use efficiencies, and promote the recycling of water is an ever-increasing need in the County. The County must be a leader in the way we conserve, use, and find new sources of water, as it will continue to be a critical planning issue in the future.

This section specifically addresses the County’s:

- Water supply and drinking water;
- Local and imported water supplies;
- Water distributors; and,
- Urban Water Management Plans.

### Background

To manage existing and future water supplies, the County coordinates with state agencies and local water districts to operate a complex system that conserves, manages, and efficiently utilizes existing water resources for the County. In semi-arid Los Angeles County, drought, pollution, population growth, and land use affect the quantity and quality of

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local and regional water supplies. The overall demand for water is projected to increase dramatically between 2000 and 2030, and the cost, quality, and availability of water will affect future development patterns. The County's water supply is further threatened by ground and surface water pollution, as well as a reduction in the open space necessary for surface water percolation and groundwater recharge. In short, the County recognizes that the effective maintenance and implementation of our water management system is an increasingly important factor in determining the success of our future development.



Pyramid Lake Reservoir

### Water Supply and Drinking Water

Los Angeles County is highly susceptible to the ebbs and flows of water availability. The region's climate is characterized by extended periods of dry weather, and the County's annual average rainfall is 15.0 inches. However, rainfall in the County varies significantly based on topography. For example, the San Gabriel Mountains receives an annual average rainfall of 27.5 inches, whereas the Antelope Valley, an arid desert region, receives just 7.8 inches annually.



California Aqueduct

The County is served by a mix of local and imported water supplies, delivered through a complex system of aqueducts, reservoirs, and groundwater basins. The County is extremely dependent on outside sources for its water supply. Approximately 33 percent of the County's water supply comes from local sources, while the remaining water supply is imported from outside the County. The County must continue to develop a diverse range of water resources to reduce the risk of an overall water shortage, especially since a local water supply is more sustainable and energy efficient than imported water. The following discussion outlines the primary local and imported sources of the County's water supply.

#### Local Water Sources

Local water sources include surface water from mountain runoff, groundwater, and recycled water. While local water supplies are the least costly, surface water and groundwater supplies fluctuate in response to variations in annual rainfall, incidents of contamination, and effectiveness of conservation measures. Recycled water provides a reliable, consistently high quality supply of water, but also requires that additional infrastructure, statutes, and regulations governing the use of recycled water be modified before recycled water reaches its full supply potential.

Desalination, or removing salt from ocean water, is a credible, potential water resource. There are several water agencies throughout Southern California preparing to add



desalinated water to their list of water supplies. The Metropolitan Water District and Castaic Lake Water Agency plan to purchase desalinated water, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is planning to build a desalination plant in Playa del Rey to supplement local water supplies in the County.

### Imported Water Sources

Water is imported into the County from three sources: the Colorado River, the Bay-Delta in northern California via the State Water Project, and the Owens Valley via the Los Angeles Aqueduct. The Los Angeles Aqueduct primarily serves the residents and businesses of the City of Los Angeles.

Imported water supplies are politically controversial, especially as drought conditions have reduced major sources of water and States fight over dwindling imported water supplies, such as from the Colorado River. Depending on environmental needs, conservation measures, precipitation levels, population growth, and political maneuverings, imported water sources may not be adequate in the future, and water agencies must work to find additional sources to offset projected demand.

### Water Distributors

Water services in the County are provided by a complex network of water districts, water wholesalers, and private companies that go about the business of developing and improving water service for their customers. Most of the imported water utilized in the unincorporated County is provided by the Metropolitan Water District, Castaic Lake Water Agency, Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency, Littlerock Creek Irrigation District, and the Palmdale Water District. Further information on these water distributors is available on their websites which are listed in the Technical Appendix to the General Plan.

### Urban Water Management Plans

In accordance with the State of California Urban Water Management Planning Act of 1983, every urban water supplier above a minimum size must prepare and adopt an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). These plans contain a description and evaluation of water supplies, reclamation programs, and conservation activities. Based upon land use plans provided by local governments, the UWMP calculates the projected water demand for the district and compares this demand against current and anticipated water

supplies. These plans, which are updated every five (5) years, are provided to local governments to assist them in making informed decisions about new development proposals and whether there will be sufficient water supplies to serve completed projects.

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is preparing the Regional Comprehensive Plan (RCP) and is compiling all Urban Water Management Plans within the SCAG region. Local and County urban water management plans can be found on SCAG's website at <http://www.scag.ca.gov/rcp/uwmp.htm>.



Streams and Wetlands Percolate Water into Aquifers

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## Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-2

A protected supply of County water resources.

- **Policy PS 2.1:** Support preservation, restoration and strategic acquisition of open space to preserve natural streams, drainage channels, wetlands, and rivers, which are necessary for the healthy function of watersheds.
- **Policy PS 2.2:** Protect natural groundwater recharge areas and artificial spreading grounds.
- **Policy PS 2.3:** Effectively manage watersheds to balance growth and development with resource conservation and flood hazard mitigation.
- **Policy PS 2.4:** Support the preparation and implementation of watershed and river master plans.
- **Policy PS 2.5:** Promote the development and use of new and improved water and flood management technologies and infrastructure such as the utilization of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques.
- **Policy PS 2.6:** Maximize the conservation of water throughout the County.
- **Policy PS 2.7:** Expand the existing supply of water through the development of new supplies such as desalination.

#### Implementation Action PS 2.1

Review and create a water conservation ordinance with appropriate enforcement procedures. Since Los Angeles County imports most of its water supply, this finite supply should be carefully distributed, used, and recycled in order to maximize efficiency and increase reliability.

### Goal PS-3

A clean supply of water to satisfy current and future demand.

- **Policy PS 3.1:** Support measures to improve the quality of imported and local water, groundwater supplies, stormwater runoff and desalinized water.
- **Policy PS 3.2:** Require all development to provide a guaranteed supply of water.
- **Policy PS 3.3:** Eliminate point and non-point source water pollution.
- **Policy PS 3.4:** Restrict the use of septic systems adjacent to aqueducts to eliminate the possibility of wastewater intrusion into the water supply.
- **Policy PS 3.5:** Encourage and support the increased production, distribution and use of recycled water to provide for groundwater recharge, seawater intrusion barrier injection, irrigation, industrial processes, and other non-potable beneficial uses.
- **Policy PS 3.6:** Promote development of multi-use facilities for stormwater quality improvement, groundwater recharge, flood management and other compatible uses.

#### Implementation Action PS 3.1

Develop a “green streets” infrastructure program that retrofits stormwater infrastructure one project at a time to maximize groundwater recharge and reduce the burden on the County’s existing, centralized stormwater management system. A green streets approach to stormwater management would capture nearly all stormwater runoff to percolate into the groundwater basin, producing future water supply and quality, recreational, and environmental benefits.

#### Implementation Action PS 3.2

Create a water monitoring system to match existing water demand, existing and future conservation efforts, and projected demand with projected water supplies to ensure water availability for all development projects. Require this balance sheet to stay solvent, and create a method to reject all development that does not have a guaranteed supply of water. for at least 20 years

#### Implementation Action PS 3.3

Create the position of a County water liaison and lobbyist to the State capital in Sacramento.

### III. WASTEWATER AND SEWER

The Wastewater and Sewer section addresses the management of wastewater effluent and raw sewage in Los Angeles County. Like most other public services in the County, wastewater management involves a complex mix of service providers to cover its large population and vast geographic area. The primary providers of wastewater management services for the unincorporated areas of the County include the Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Works (DPW), and individual cities' community-wide septic or wastewater systems.

#### The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County

The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County are in charge of the sewer and wastewater management activities in most of the County. They are a confederation of 24 independent districts that serve the wastewater and solid waste management needs of approximately 5.2 million people. The Sanitation Districts' area covers 800 square miles, including 78 incorporated cities and the unincorporated County. As of 2005, the Sanitation Districts owned, operated, and maintained 1,340 miles of sewers that conveyed 510 million gallons per day (gpd) of wastewater, 200 million gpd of which is recycled, to eleven (11) wastewater treatment plants. The service areas for the County's sewer systems include the Joint Outfall System, the Santa Clarita Valley,



Joint Water Pollution Control Plant  
Source: Pictometry International Corp



Typical Los Angeles County Storm Channel

and the Antelope Valley. Further information about the County Sanitation Districts can be found on their website at [www.lacsd.org](http://www.lacsd.org).

#### Los Angeles County Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works maintains 5,200 miles of main line sewers, 255 pumping stations and four (4) sewage treatment plants. The Department of Public Works Environmental Programs Division also permits and inspects industrial waste discharge into local sewers. The Los Angeles County Code, Title 20, requires that every business that disposes industrial wastewater obtain a permit. These permits, and the assurance that proper water treatment procedures are conducted prior to discharge, are regulated by the Environmental Programs Division.

#### Wastewater Management Issues

The treatment of stormwater runoff in wastewater management systems is a serious concern in the County, particularly because stormwater runoff contains pollutants including heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, animal droppings, trash, food waste, fuels, oils, solvents, lubricants, and grease. The collection of these pollutants into stormwater channels, which has traditionally been discharged directly into the Pacific Ocean, has become a serious water quality issue.

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As the County's reliance on imported water increases, more and more stormwater runoff is being diverted into the sewer system for treatment and reuse as recycled water. There is also a renewed focus for treating stormwater runoff and other wastewater on-site before it is conveyed to the sewage system. Instead of burdening the existing sewage system, on-site treatment and retention basins clean up wastewater before it enters the water system, and if designed and located correctly, can increase natural groundwater recharge. This concept of treating stormwater runoff on-site is known as Low Impact Development (LID), which is a major policy consideration in this General Plan.

## Wastewater Management Plans

Integrated Regional Water Management Plans (IRWMPs) deal mostly with water supply and quality. However, the involvement of wastewater in these plans has grown with the advent of the recycled water concept. Recycled water, which is the effluent of treated wastewater, is increasingly utilized for secondary uses, such as in industrial cooling and landscaping. In parts of the arid Mojave Desert, recycled water is also being injected into aquifers as a water banking measure.

The Standard Urban Stormwater Mitigation Plan (SUSMP), developed by the Department of Public Works and last updated in 2002, provides guidance to builders, land developers, engineers, and planners in the selection of post-construction Best Management Practices (BMPs). Further information on the SUSMP is available at the Department of Public Works website at [http://ladpw.org/wmd/npdes/SUSMP\\_MANUAL.pdf](http://ladpw.org/wmd/npdes/SUSMP_MANUAL.pdf).

**Table 9.1: Remaining Permitted Capacity for In-County Landfills (as of 1/1/07)**

Landfill	2005 Disposal Rate (tons/day)	Remaining Capacity (Millions Tons)	Remaining Life (Years)
Puente Hills	12,079	26.6	7
Chiquita Canyon	4,853	11.01	8
Sunshine Canyon (County)	2,693	7.53	9*
Sunshine Canyon** (City)	4,118	4.26	4*
Calabasas	1,492	7.89	17
Lancaster***	1,221	13.48	6
Scholl Canyon	1,431	6.4	14
Antelope Valley	997	9.19	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>28,884</b>	<b>186.36</b>	

Source: Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Plan, Annual Report Dated April 2008

Note:

Tons/Day = 6-day week

Imported waste to various types of disposal facilities - 854 tpd

Exported waste to landfills located outside of Los Angeles County – 5,713 tpd. Remaining capacity is based on an annual landfill operator survey.

\*On February 6, 2007, the Board of Supervisors approved a new Conditional Use Permit (CUP) establishing a 30-year life. Provided certain conditions are met, the total available capacity for the combined City/County landfill is 73.4 million tons.

\*\*Lancaster Landfill current CUP requires it to close by August 2012.

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-4

An updated and reliable network of wastewater systems in the County.

- **Policy PS 4.1:** Encourage the planning and continued development of countywide wastewater systems.
- **Policy PS 4.2:** Promote innovative programs and techniques in wastewater management.
- **Policy PS 4.43:** Avoid the use of private sewage disposal systems in landslide, hillside and other hazard areas.

#### Implementation Action PS 4.1

Develop a policy document on package sewage (wastewater) treatment plants that provides policy direction, siting, and design guidelines.

#### Implementation Action PS 4.2

Initiate septic tank maintenance educational programs in conjunction with the Department of Public Works.



## IV. SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Los Angeles County has the largest and most complex waste management system in the country. In 2007, the County produced on average 76,800 tons of trash per day. As available space for landfills is becoming scarce and more distant, and as local landfills reach their holding capacity, cities and counties have been mandated to more effectively manage waste and reduce their solid waste volume. This section describes the existing waste management programs in the County, and sets forth goals and policies for the future management of solid waste.

### Background

The defining elements of waste management in the County continue to be the growing amounts of waste being generated and disposed, a shortage of solid waste processing facilities, and strong public opposition for new solid waste management facilities. There are eight (8) major solid waste

landfills, four (4) small solid waste landfills, and two (2) waste-to-energy facilities that serve the County, as shown in **Figure 9.1**.

**Table 9.1** lists the remaining permitted capacity for landfills in the County as of January 1, 2007. These numbers reflect the average amount of waste that landfills take in per day, and how many years it will take to reach full capacity at current disposal rates. In 2013, the Puente Hills Landfill, the largest landfill in the County, will close. At that time, a significant percentage of the County's solid waste will have to be exported to facilities out of the County, which will result in increased costs and environmental impacts. This concern is exacerbated by the fact that waste generation in the County is projected to increase to approximately 99,500 tons per day (tpd) within the next 15 years.

Based on 2006 waste disposal figures, without major expansions to existing landfills, the County's current disposal system has approximately ten (10) years of remaining capacity left. The County recognizes the importance of effective planning and management of solid waste by promoting countywide waste diversion programs.

In 2006 the County exported over 5,700 tpd to landfills in neighboring counties. In order to meet future disposal needs, the County will continue to export more waste to these landfills. Solid waste enterprises within the County are proponents of enhancing and developing Material Recovery Facilities/Transfer Stations to provide additional infrastructure to help meet our future disposal needs. The County Sanitation Districts completed acquisition of the Mesquite Regional Landfill in Imperial County, and has signed a purchase agreement for acquisition of the Eagle Mountain Landfill, subject to resolution of pending litigation. Mesquite Landfill has a permitted daily capacity of 20,000 tpd and a 100-year lifespan. The County Sanitation Districts are in the process of planning, designing, and developing a waste-by-rail system that could transport up to 8,000 tpd to the Mesquite Landfill.

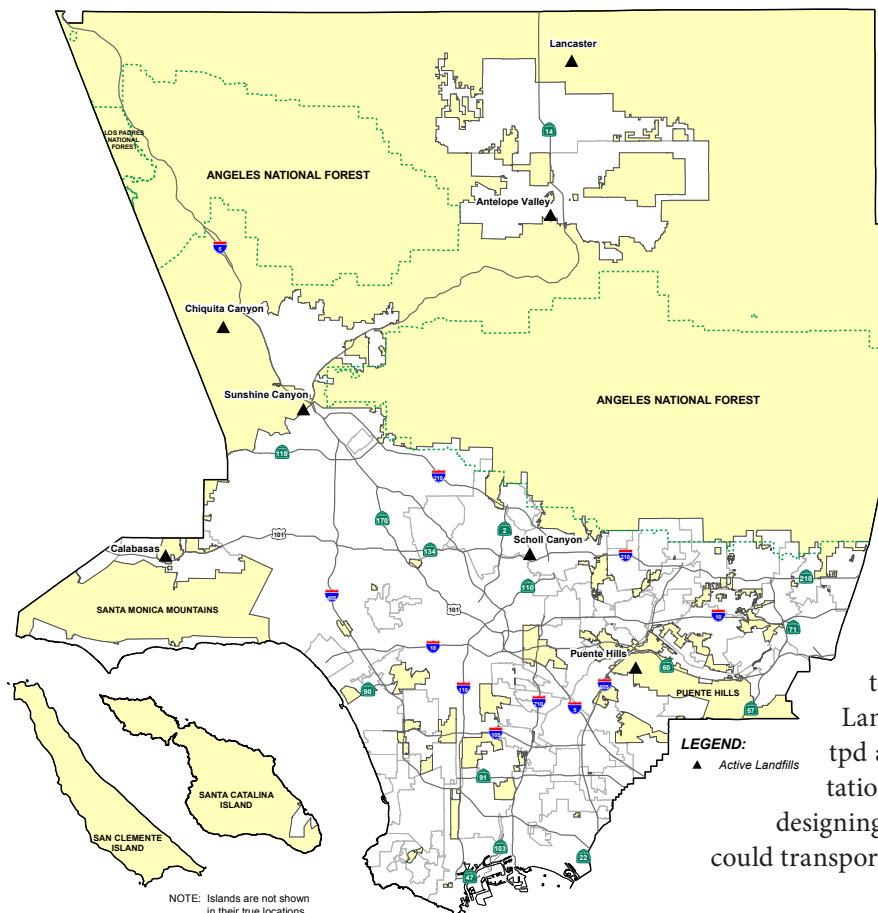


Figure 9.1: L.A. County Landfill Map

The 2006 Annual Report for the Los Angeles County Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP) describes the County's current strategy for maintaining adequate disposal capacity through 2021. Provided certain assumptions are met, the County would meet its disposal capacity needs by successfully permitting and developing all in-county landfill expansions, more extensively utilizing out-of-county disposal capacity, developing necessary infrastructure to facilitate exportation of waste to out-of-County landfills, and developing facilities utilizing conversion technologies to the extent technically and economically feasible. The development of out-of-County disposal capacity, markets for recovered materials, and conversion technologies are anticipated to meet the expanding needs for the County.

### Waste Management Programs

The County has a number of countywide diversion, source reduction, and household hazardous waste programs. In 2005, the countywide diversion rate, or the rate of waste that has been diverted from landfills through recycling and

#### Conversion Technologies

As part of the strategy to reduce dependence on landfills, the County is evaluating and encouraging the development of conversion technologies in the region in order to transform residual solid waste from a liability to a resource. The Southern California Conversion Technology Demonstration project spearheaded by the County will demonstrate the technical, economic, and environmental feasibility of these technologies. Conversion technologies refer to a wide variety of biological, chemical, and thermal (excluding incineration) processes capable of converting residual post-recycled municipal solid waste and other organic feedstocks into useful products, alternative fuels, and clean and renewable energy. Additionally, utilizing conversion technologies locally could effectively enhance recycling, reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, extend the life of existing landfills, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

other programs, was 49%, about the same as the statewide rate (48%). In that year, the County disposed approximately 12 million tons of waste.

A partial list of County waste management programs includes the following: Countywide Household Hazardous Waste and Electronic Waste Management Program; County Smart Gardening Management Program; Smart Business Recycling Program, Illegal Dumping Program, Waste Tire Recycling Program, and the County Residential Recycling Program (Ordinance 90-0167). More information on these and other waste management programs can be found in the Public Works Environmental Programs Division webpage at <http://dpw.lacounty.gov/epd/>.

#### Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP)

Los Angeles County adopted an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP) in 1997. The IWMP was prepared in response to the Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (known as AB 939), and its associated regulations, which were developed by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB). As required by law, the IWMP establishes countywide goals for waste management, describes the historical countywide system of waste



Landfill Dozer

management infrastructure, describes the current system of waste management in the County, and summarizes all waste management programs. The latest IWMP for Los Angeles County was adopted in July 1997 and is updated annually through Annual Reports. The report can be found at the Department of Public Works Solid Waste Information Management System website, located at [www.SolidWasteDRS.org](http://www.SolidWasteDRS.org).

### Trash Hauling

In the unincorporated areas of the County, solid waste collection services are provided through an open-market system in which each resident directly arranges for services with the hauler. This system has been unable to meet demands created by changes in federal and state laws, public attitudes toward protecting the environment, and consumers' demands for better services and protection against excessive rate increases. The Department of Public Works began implementing the franchise system for the County for solid waste collection. Existing franchise areas include La Crescenta, Bassett/Valinda/South San Jose Hills, South San Gabriel, West Whittier, Citrus, and Rowland Heights. These franchise areas have seen improved customer service, increased accountability, cleaner neighborhoods, lower regulated rates charged by waste haulers, and increased diversion rates in these areas.

### Sanitation Districts - Waste

The Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County are a confederation of 24 independent districts that serve the wastewater and solid waste management needs of approximately 5.2 million people in the County. The Sanitation Districts' area covers 800 square miles, including 78 incorporated cities and the unincorporated County. As of 2005, the Sanitation Districts operated three (3) active sanitary landfills that handled 20,000 tpd, 3,500 tpd of which is recycled. The County operates four (4) landfill gas-to-energy facilities that generate a total of 68 megawatts of energy per year, two (2) recycling centers, three (3) materials recovery/transfer facilities, and partners with local jurisdictions in the operation of two (2) refuse-to-energy facilities. The increased use of environmentally negligible refuse to energy facilities and a massive expansion of the County's recycling programs and capacity will add to the efficiency, reliability, and longevity of the overall waste management system. Further information about the County Sanitation Districts is available at [www.lacsd.org](http://www.lacsd.org).

## Goals, Policies and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-5

Minimal waste and pollution in the County.

- **Policy PS 5.1:** Maintain an efficient, safe and responsive waste management system that facilitates waste reduction while protecting the health and safety of the public.
- **Policy PS 5.2:** Reduce dependence on landfills by encouraging solid waste management facilities that utilize conversion technologies and waste to energy facilities.
- **Policy PS 5.3:** Ensure the safe use of former landfill sites.
- **Policy PS 5.4:** Reduce the County's waste stream to negligible levels.
- **Policy PS 5.5:** Encourage the use and procurement of recyclable and biodegradable materials throughout the County.
- **Policy PS 5.6:** Encourage recycling of construction and demolition debris generated by public and private projects.
- **Policy PS 5.7:** Ensure adequate and regular waste and recycling collection services.

#### Implementation Action PS 5.1

Participate in a collaborative inter-agency effort to create a Zero Waste Program that will guide County Departments toward a zero waste, 100 percent recyclable environment.

#### Implementation Action PS 5.2

Create household, commercial, and industrial waste reduction programs that identify incentives and best practices for waste reducing and recycling activities.

## V. UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Los Angeles County is layered with utility rights-of-way, and properties that contain tower structures, substations, generating plants, pipelines, storage fields, valve stations, wells, radio and television studios, and other equipment facilities that comprise the County's utility infrastructure, information, and communication networks. Public agencies

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have little responsibility in providing electric, natural gas, or telecommunication services to unincorporated areas of the County. However, the County recognizes the need to define and ensure adequate levels of service in these areas as the County continues to grow.

### Levels of Service

Telecommunication services, such as phone and cable service, are provided by several private companies throughout the County. In the fast-changing telecommunications sector, private service providers have managed to provide County residents with adequate levels to meet the County's expanding population and economic sectors.

One service area in the County that is facing considerable strain is electricity and power. As a result of continuing high growth in electricity usage, and the prolonged hot weather conditions during the spring of 2000, the entire State of California experienced "brown outs", or periodic losses of power and forced reductions in electricity delivery. Subsequent years of warm weather and high electricity usage have kept an emphasis on the need to upgrade the County's power grid and service capabilities, and more importantly, to educate the public on the need to conserve energy. Upgrades and enhancements of local services, and strong energy conservation programs will add to the reliability and efficiency of the overall utility network, and will contribute to the long-term quality of life for County residents and businesses.

Similarly, the region's substantial population growth is outpacing the development of new natural gas supplies, much of which is imported from out-of-state. In addition to heating and cooking, natural gas currently provides 73 percent to 90 percent of the energy used to generate electricity, especially in peak times. As the population continues to grow, renewed focus must be placed on the development of new natural gas supplies including local production and Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), upgrading and enhancing the region's natural gas infrastructure system to improve reliability and efficiency, strong energy conservation programs, and renewable alternatives.

A major contributor to the long-term energy independence of the County will be the increased production of energy from renewable sources. Within Los Angeles County, the primary sources of renewable energy are wind and solar power. In particular, the General Plan promotes the use and



Telecommunications Tower

permit streamlining of on-site energy production. On-site energy production will further relieve mounting pressure on the County's electricity grid. The production of energy from renewable sources on-site can also be a means to ensure the ongoing operations of primary health, safety, and civic infrastructure during times of disruption.

### Siting Facilities

Siting facilities to ensure adequate levels of utility service is increasingly difficult. Many parts of the County are built-out, leaving little room for facility expansion. At the same time, public opposition to the expansion or placement of utility infrastructure within their community is not uncommon. Energy and communication infrastructure facilities and systems can also be a matter of local, regional, or national security. Close consultation with local and federal law enforcement agencies is required to protect utility infrastructure against security risks.



Within the unincorporated areas, the County has the authority to assure land use compatibility in the process of siting many infrastructure facilities necessary for the delivery of energy and information resources. It may not preclude the reasonable siting of these facilities, but under the auspices of Title 22 of the Los Angeles County Code, the Department of Regional Planning (DRP) routinely processes discretionary review cases permitting the development of cellular telephone sites or other utility-related facilities. These uses are permitted when they are consistent with General Plan policies and compatible with the neighborhoods where they are sited.

The siting of natural gas facilities can face unique challenges. The limited number of existing natural gas storage facilities located within the County plays a critical role in supplying natural gas and assisting in the generation of electricity throughout Southern California. Stored gas is withdrawn during peak periods and transmitted to different regions as needed. The siting of new storage facilities is especially difficult because, in addition to the same land constraints and potential for public opposition encountered by above-ground utility facilities and pipelines, natural gas storage facilities must be located in areas with specific geologic conditions to ensure efficiency and reliability.

The Department of Public Works' Strategic Plan outlines service delivery goals for sanitary sewer, water supply, flood control, garbage disposal, and traffic lighting within the County. Further information on the Department's Strategic Plan is available on their website at <http://ladpw.org/>. The County promotes the careful expansion of utility and other public services in conjunction with planned growth, as well as the compatible siting of facilities and infrastructure, in the goals and policies of the General Plan.

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-6

A reliable and safe public utilities and telecommunications network throughout the County.

- **Policy PS 6.1:** Ensure efficient and cost effective utilities that serve existing and future needs.
- **Policy PS 6.2:** Improve telecommunications infrastructure and expand access to community technology networks.
- **Policy PS 6.3:** Protect and enhance public utility facilities as necessary to maintain all essential public service systems in the County.
- **Policy PS 6.4:** Increase the use of renewable energy sources in utility and telecommunications networks.

#### Implementation Action PS 6.1

Streamline the permitting process for utility and telecommunications that utilize renewable energy sources.



Nurseries are Encouraged Under Utility Corridors

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## VI. FIRE PROTECTION

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (LACFD) provides fire, safety, and emergency medical services to the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County. Additionally, there are many incorporated cities within the County that also utilize LACFD services. There are three (3) major geographic regions in the LACFD service area, which are divided into nine (9) divisions and 21 battalions, as seen in Figure 9.2.

### Personnel, Facilities, and Equipment

The LACFD currently employs over 4,800 personnel, ranging from firefighters and paramedics to lifeguards and pilots. The LACFD operates 167 fire stations, several fire prevention offices and suppression camps, and 181 lifeguard towers/headquarters facilities. The LACFD utilizes a wide array of firefighting and safety equipment that includes many specialized units that are staffed as needed, as well as the following units that are staffed daily:

- 10 helicopters;
- 156 engine companies;
- 32 truck companies;
- 4 hazardous material squads;
- 12 patrol fire trucks;
- 12 rescue/fire boats;
- 66 paramedic squads;
- 2 Urban Search and Rescue units; and,
- 4 emergency support teams.

### Funding

The LACFD is a special district and receives most of its revenue in the unincorporated area from a portion of the ad valorem property tax paid by the owners of all taxable properties. This revenue source varies from one tax rate area to another and is specifically earmarked to LACFD.

The LACFD's Special Tax is a supplemental revenue source that pays for essential fire suppression and emergency medical services. Approved by voters in 1997, the Special Tax rates are adjusted each year by 2% or the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is less. However, on August 21, 2007, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution

fixing the 2007-08 tax levy at the same level as the 2006-07 levy. Table 9.2 provides a summary of the special tax rate that goes toward LACFD services.

In addition, in 1990, the County Board of Supervisors (BOS) adopted a County of Los Angeles Developer Fee Program to fund the acquisition, construction, improvement, and equipping of fire station facilities in the high-growth, urban-expansion areas of the County. In 2006, due to the increasing costs related to fire protection and the construction of fire protection facilities, the LACFD proposed an increase in the Developer Fee Program in order to meet the growing demand for fire protection services. Effective February 1, 2008, the Board of Supervisors set the following amounts for the Developer Fee Program:

- \$.9223 per sq. ft for Malibu/Santa Monica Mountains;
- \$.9341 per sq. ft. for Santa Clarita Valley; and,
- \$.8546 per sq. ft. for the Antelope Valley.

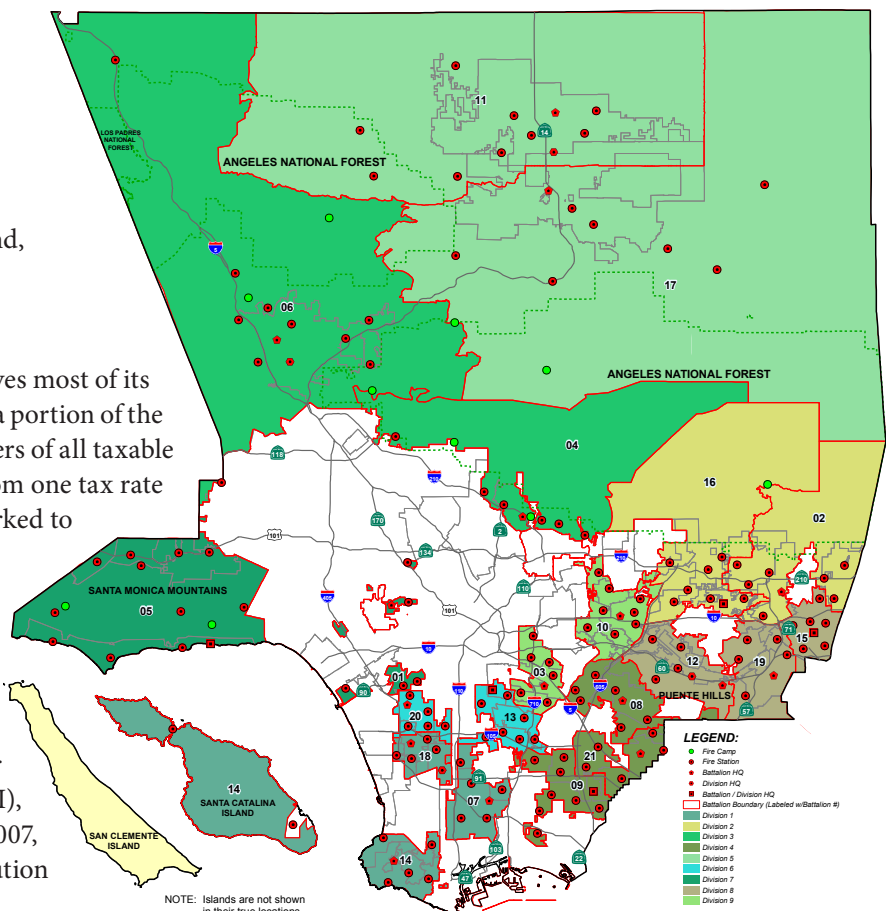


Figure 9.2: L.A. County Fire Department Regions and Divisions

**Table 9.2: Summary of Special Tax Rates for LACFD, as of 2006**

Land Use	Special Tax Rates
Single Family Residential	\$49.93
Mobile Home in Park	\$24.96
Multiple Family Residential 2 or more units less than 4 stories	\$63.07 + \$.0064 per sq. ft. over 1,555 sq. ft.
Non-Residential, Commercial/Industrial less than 4 stories	\$60.43 + \$.0407 per sq. ft. over 1,555 sq. ft.*
High Rise, 4 stories or more	\$73.58 + \$.0496 per sq. ft. over 1,555 sq. ft.*
Special Use, such as refineries and major chemical handlers	\$91.96 + \$.0620 per sq. ft. over 1,555 sq. ft.*
Vacant Land — 2 acres or less	\$12.48
Vacant Land — more than 2 acres and less than or equal to 10 acres	\$16.48
Vacant Land — more than 10 acres and less than or equal to 50 acres	\$32.94
Vacant land — more than 50 acres	\$49.93

Source: Los Angeles County Fire Department

\* Capped at 100,000 Sq. Ft. Per Parcel

### Programs and Operations

The LACFD operates a number of emergency and non-emergency operations and programs. The major operations are summarized below:

**Emergency Operations:** Provide basic emergency response supports related to fires, water rescues, hazardous materials, and other emergency-related situations. For the year 2007, the LACFD responded to 9,951 fires and 199,224 emergency medical calls.

**Fire Prevention Division:** Focuses on educating the community about the benefits of proper safety practices and identifying and eliminating all types of hazardous conditions, which pose a threat to life, the environment, and property. In 2007, the Fire Prevention Division had a total of 188 civilian and sworn personnel.

**Emergency Medical Services (EMS):** Responsible for paramedic training, EMT-1 certification, equipment, quality improvement, EMS data management, and legal aspects for all basic and advanced emergency medical services. The EMS section

is managed by a highly trained team of emergency medical professionals, including a battalion chief, an EMS education program director, a quality improvement program director, four paramedic coordinators, and thirteen (13) senior nurse instructors supported by an administrative team.

**Air and Wildland:** Provides emergency and non-emergency response, fire camps, and heavy equipment operations. For the year 2007, air operations responded to 860 fires and performed close to 2,000 emergency medical incidents.

**Forestry Division:** Responsible for the review of environmental documents related to the development and protection of oak tree resources, the development of vegetation management plans and proposals, the coordination of wildland fire planning, the enforcement of the brush clearance program, the review of fuel modification plans, erosion control, and watershed management. The Forestry Division is comprised of three (3) sections: Operations, Natural Resources, and Brush Clearance. In 2007, the Division was staffed with 45 professionals. Five (5) Forestry units are located in Malibu, Saugus, Lake Hughes, San Dimas, and at Henninger Flats in the foothills above Altadena. At each unit, tree seedlings are provided to the public and advice is shared with local homeowners. In addition, Forestry personnel staff Camp Paige (Camp 17), located in La Verne, where foresters train and work with wards-of-the-court on forestry projects.



Los Angeles County Firefighters

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Fire Helicopter

**Health Hazardous Materials Division (HHMD):** Also called the Los Angeles County Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA). HHMD consolidates, coordinates, and administers permits, inspection activities, and enforcement activities throughout the County. There are six (6) unified programs that HHMD implements with the help of Participating Agencies, which are comprised of a representation from municipal fire departments:

- Hazardous Waste;
- Hazardous Materials Release Response Plan and Inventory;
- California Accidental Release Prevention;
- Hazardous Materials Management Plan and Hazardous Materials Inventory Statement;
- Underground Storage Tank; and,
- Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tank.

LACFD plans their services in line with the County's population and economic growth projections, and continued growth in the County will significantly affect LACFD operations. Capital costs represent a small portion of the fire Department's budget, and fire protection services are a labor-intensive, 24 hour-a-day, seven (7) days-a-week endeavor. As such, fire stations incur high operating costs and require a critical mass of development to provide adequate ongoing revenues. The County recognizes that to support sustainable public service infrastructure, development in isolated and hazardous areas should not be permitted.

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-7

A County with reliable and satisfactory fire protection services and facilities.

- **Policy PS 7.1:** Promote phased development, whereby land use proposals are developed in conjunction with approved fire protection facilities or capabilities.
- **Policy PS 7.2:** Support the expansion of fire protection facilities where needed.
- **Policy PS 7.3:** Encourage ongoing evaluation of fire protection funding sources.
- **Policy PS 7.4:** All projects must comply with Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements, including access, water mains, fire flows, and hydrants.
- **Policy PS 7.5:** Fire fuel modification plans will consider the habitat and watershed management aspect of each site, while addressing public safety.

### Implementation Action PS 7.1

Work with the LACFD to upgrade the Building, Fire, Subdivision, and Zoning Codes to require onsite fire preventative measures in development designs.



Fire Station 89, Agoura Hills





Hazardous Materials Squad Truck

## VII. LAW ENFORCEMENT PROTECTION

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) ranks among other sheriff law enforcement agencies as the largest and most diverse in the world. LASD provides law enforcement services to 40 contract cities, 90 unincorporated communities, nine (9) community colleges, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), and 48 Superior Courts. The Sheriff provides law enforcement services to the 1 million people residing within the unincorporated areas of the County, as well as to more than four (4) million residents living within cities who contract with the LASD to provide law enforcement services. Additionally, the LASD is responsible for the housing, feeding, medical treatment, and security of an approximate daily inmate population of 20,000.

### Personnel, Operations, and Facilities

The LASD is budgeted for 17,960 staff positions, of which 9,888 are sworn peace officers and 8,072 are professional staff people. The LASD is comprised of 11 divisions, each headed by a Division Chief. There are three (3) patrol divisions (Field Operation

Regions 1, II, and III), Detective Division, Custody Operations Division, Correctional Services Division, Court Services Division, Office of Homeland Security, Technical Services Division, Administrative Services Division, and the Leadership and Training Division.

The Field Operation Regions are centered on 25 patrol stations that are dispersed throughout the County. The location and detailed information of each station may be found on the LASD website at [http://www.lasd.org/stations/station\\_index.html](http://www.lasd.org/stations/station_index.html). Custody Operations and Correctional Services Divisions operate the County's seven (7) jail facilities and the Inmate Reception Center. Detective units, court

facilities, and other administrative offices are located throughout the County.

Another priority for the LASD has been the repair or replacement of outdated facilities. In 2006, the Special Enforcement Bureau moved into a newly refurbished Biscailuz Regional Training Center in the City Terrace community and two (2) new stations were built in the Cities of Palmdale and San



Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy

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Sheriff's Station, Altadena

Dimas. In 2007, the LASD expanded and refurbished the Lakewood Sheriff's Station and opened a state-of-the-art Los Angeles Regional Crime and Forensics Laboratory.

The building vacated by the Special Enforcement Bureau is now the newly renovated home of the Community Oriented Policing Bureau Headquarters and the East Los Angeles Gang Enforcement Team. Additional space is being renovated in the Antelope Valley Area to house the Antelope Valley Crime Fighting Initiative (AVCFI). This newly renovated space will co-locate team members from many specialized units, such as gang enforcement officers, investigators, and members of community-based anti-crime organizations within a contiguous space. This new facility will provide an atmosphere wherein ideas and information may be shared freely between the diverse groups to whom the goal of reducing crime in the Antelope Valley is paramount.

Construction on the new Athens Sheriff's Station, located in southwest Los Angeles County, began in November of 2007. Upon completion in late 2009, Athens Station will replace most of the patrol functions currently carried out by Lennox Sheriff's Station servicing the unincorporated County areas of Lennox, Gardena, Athens, Los Angeles, El Camino Village, Del Aire, Wiseburn, and the contract city of Lawndale.

LASD crime statistics depict a downward trend in criminal activity for 2006. However, the number of arrests made within the County increased one (1) percent. The necessity

for police services is not spurred by crime statistics alone. LASD personnel responded to 1,166,616 calls for service in 2006. In addition to proactive enforcement of criminal laws, the LASD also provides investigative, traffic enforcement, accident investigation, and community education functions. To effectively and efficiently fulfill all of these functions, the LASD should be staffed at a level of one (1) deputy sheriff per each 1,000 population. As a result, recruitment and training remain one of the LASD's top priorities. A milestone was achieved on December 1, 2006, when LASD attained an all-time high for the recruitment of sworn personnel. Over 1,000 new deputy sheriff trainees were hired within a one-year period.

### **Gang Violence**

Although the interdiction of gang violence is the responsibility of the entire Sheriff's Department, one bureau is specifically dedicated to this mission. Operation Safe Streets Bureau's (OSS) main purpose is to reduce gang violence within the Sheriff's Department's jurisdiction.

OSS currently has 68 Gang Detail Deputies and 92 Gang Investigator Deputies who deploy from 12 sheriff's stations throughout the county. The stations are, Lancaster, Palmdale, East Los Angeles, Temple, Pico Rivera, Industry, Lakewood, Norwalk, Carson, Century, Compton, and Lennox. There is also a special Problems Team comprised of a sergeant and six (6) gang detail deputies who respond to areas with the greatest need for additional enforcement.



Sheriff's Patrol Boat, Port of Long Beach



OSS works closely with the United States Attorney's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Bureau (ATF), and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) to investigate and prosecute gang members federally. Recently, OSS was instrumental in obtaining 102 federal indictments on the Florencia 13 gang for federal racketeering charges and other serious crimes. Gang related violence in the unincorporated areas has seen an encouraging decrease in 2007 from 2006 even with new reporting procedures in place to capture additional gang related crimes at the patrol level.



Sheriff's Helicopter on Patrol

In 2007, the Sheriff's Department implemented a strategy to abate ten (10) gangs at a time under the direction of Assistant Sheriff Paul Tanaka. Station commanders are responsible for reducing the violence attributed to their target gang and they are compelled to utilize all available resources to abate the gang's existence as a nuisance in the community.

### Funding

The LASD budget is approved by the County Board of Supervisors through the utilization of state and local tax dollars. These funds are augmented by revenue generating contracts and grant allowances.

The changing fiscal landscape in California, including the passage of tax limitation measures, declining popular support for bond measures, and reductions in state and federal assistance has hampered the capability of local governments to fund a public safety infrastructure. Faced with this ever increasing trend, the LASD has joined with the City of Santa Clarita and the Board of Supervisors to propose the establishment of Law Enforcement Facilities Fees (impact fees) on all new property and commercial developments in northern Los Angeles County. If adopted, revenues realized from the Law Enforcement Facilities Fee program will be utilized to ensure that new development ventures pay the capital costs of expanded or new law enforcement facilities associated with growth.

### Future Conditions

It is projected that the population and the number of businesses in Los Angeles County will continue to grow in the coming years. This growth pattern is particularly evident in northern Los Angeles County. Additionally, County jails are becoming more crowded. For example, over the last five (5) years, there has been a 7.4 percent increase in the number of inmates booked into the Los Angeles County jail system. With these factors in mind, the LASD is preparing for the future. A comprehensive plan to meet the needs of the County with regard to jail facilities is being developed. The Custody Division Plan includes two (2) facilities for the rehabilitation of female offenders; a new or newly renovated facility on the site of the Sybil Brand Institute in City Terrace and the construction of a new facility on the grounds of the Pitchess Detention Center compound. Also being investigated is the possibility of expansion at Mira Loma Detention Center and the renovations of Men's Central Jail and the Inmate Reception Center.

The possibility of constructing or expanding sheriff's stations in the Antelope Valley, Newhall, Gorman, East Los Angeles, and Santa Clarita areas is being investigated. The LASD continues in its commitment to develop the needed infrastructure to professionally and efficiently provide a "Tradition of Service" to the men and women of the County of Los Angeles in the coming decades.

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## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-8

A County with reliable and satisfactory law enforcement protection services and facilities.

- **Policy PS 8.1:** Promote phased development, whereby land use proposals are developed in conjunction with approved law enforcement capabilities.
- **Policy PS 8.2:** Support the expansion of law enforcement facilities and programs, where needed, to reduce the level of crime in the County.
- **Policy PS 8.3:** Encourage ongoing evaluation of law enforcement funding sources.

#### Implementation Action PS 8.1

Collaborate with law enforcement officials, non-profits and community stakeholders to increase anti-gang initiatives and other community building efforts.

## VIII. EDUCATION

Los Angeles County is home to one of the largest public school systems in the nation. While the County does not operate any of these school districts, the Los Angeles County Office of Education (COE), the nation's largest regional education agency, serves as an intermediary between the local school districts and the California Department of Education. The COE, operated by the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, is guided by the County Board of Education, a seven (7) member board that is appointed by the County Board of Supervisors.

### Background

As of 2005, the County encompasses 81 school districts that serve nearly 1.7 million students at more than 1,700 school sites. In addition to the K-12 school districts, the County also con-

tains 13 community college districts. For a list of these districts and their respective schools, please visit the COE website at [www.lacoe.edu](http://www.lacoe.edu).

### Los Angeles County Office of Education (COE)

The COE provides programs and services for teachers, administrators, parents, and schools. These include business and financial services to districts, teacher and leadership training, school reform policy, and community partnership development. The COE also consults with school districts regarding curriculum, instruction, assessment of programs, employment services, and school-to-career training.

In addition to the many programs provided on a regional basis, the COE runs the County's Head Start Preschool program, which is the largest in the nation, the juvenile court and community schools, and two (2) independent schools; the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts and the Los Angeles County Polytechnic High School.

### Higher Education

Some of the State's most prestigious higher education institutions are located within Los Angeles County. These include private schools such as the University of Southern California (USC), specialty schools like the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SciArc) and the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), and major public institutions



Safe Routes to School

“The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead

—Aristotle

like the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). A list of the higher education opportunities within the County can be found at [www.californiacolleges.edu](http://www.californiacolleges.edu).

### County School Impact Assessments

As a primary unit of neighborhood life, local schools are a vital component in the County’s development. Currently, through the County subdivision approval process, developers are required to assess the need for and provide land for the construction of schools within their development where appropriate. Development impact fees, based on the size of a development, are distributed to the appropriate school district for the construction of school facilities before the County issues any building permits. Additionally, the CEQA process requires the analysis of development impacts on educational facilities and services. The County utilizes CEQA analysis on all discretionary development that has an impact on the environment and community services such as education.

### Future Conditions

There is no countywide plan for the development of education facilities. However, the Los Angeles Unified School District is currently underway with the largest school building campaign in its history. The assessment of facility needs and the construction of schools fall to individual school districts throughout the County. The COE does provide a vision statement and strategic opportunities for educational facility development.

The County’s role in developing and managing educational facilities and programs is limited. However, the General Plan promotes the adequate provision of educational services to meet the needs of the County’s population and economic sectors.

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-9

A thriving and well-funded network of school districts and education providers throughout the County.

- **Policy PS 9.1:** Ensure a desired level of educational facilities through land use and facility planning.
- **Policy PS 9.2:** Encourage the shared use of sites for development of schools, parks, libraries, housing, and other compatible uses.
- **Policy PS 9.3:** Promote extensive adult education and workforce training centers around the County.
- **Policy PS 9.3:** Site new school facilities away from major pollution sources, such as freeways.

#### Implementation Action PS 9.1

Work with County Counsel to explore contractual language to be used in joint-use agreements with school districts for the shared use of facilities, playgrounds, and other resources.

## IX. LIBRARIES

The County of Los Angeles Public Library provides the residents of the County’s diverse communities with easy access to the information and knowledge needed to nurture cultural exploration and lifelong learning. The County Public Library was established in 1912 under authority of the County Free Library Act. Today it is one of the largest public libraries in the nation and provides library services to over 3.6 million residents living in unincorporated areas, and to residents of 51 of the 88 incorporated cities of the County. The Library system is a special fund department operating under the direction of the County Board of Supervisors.

### Operations and Programs

The County Public Library is a dynamic network of community libraries that are vibrant centers of knowledge, culture, and recreation. County libraries benefit from a shared collection of books, databases, and other library materials, centrally designed service programs, and the cost-effectiveness of centralized purchasing, processing,

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LA County Students

and delivery. Library services are provided at 86 community libraries, four (4) bookmobiles, and a variety of special reference and resource centers.

The Library offers a diverse array of programs and services for children, students, teens, adults, seniors, and families to support reading and learning, and to promote multicultural understanding and appreciation. The Library provides a strong early childhood pre-literacy program, and special parent education programs have been developed with Head Start, the County Department of Health Services (DHS), and various educational and health-related non-profit agencies. Family Place Centers in 19 County libraries offer valuable services to families, such as emergent literacy, reading readiness, parent education services, and age-appropriate programming for babies, toddlers, preschoolers, and their parents and caregivers. Homework Centers in 40 libraries provide after-school homework assistance on a one-on-one basis, live interactive online homework help, and access to educational resources and computers to support elementary and middle school students.

Four (4) ethnic resource centers provide specialized subject collections on the African American, American Indian, Asian Pacific and Chicano communities. The Californiana Collection focuses on the history of California in general, and Southern California in particular, with special emphasis on local history materials about the cities and communities served by the Library. Literary Centers throughout the County Public Library's service area offer a variety of literacy services, including tutoring, instruction in English as a second language, and family literacy.

In Fiscal Year 2005-2006, Library staff circulated over 13.4 million items to 2.65 million cardholders, answered over 9.9 million reference questions, provided 16,000 programs to nearly 600,000 children, teens, and adults, and assisted the public with over 3.6 million Internet sessions on the Library's public access computers. Supplementing the 6.9 million volume book collection, the Library also offers magazines, newspapers, microfilm, government publications, specialized reference materials, cassettes, compact discs, videocassettes, and internet access. In 2007, all County libraries began providing wireless Internet access, and in 2008, the Library will implement a new integrated library system, increasing access to electronic information for library customers as well as remote users.



Bob Luca Memorial Library



**Table 9.3: L.A. County Public Library Mitigation Fees, as of 2007**

Planning Area	Fee (per dwelling unit)
Planning Area 1: Santa Clarita Valley	\$765.00
Planning Area 2: Antelope Valley	\$743.00
Planning Area 3: West San Gabriel Valley	\$775.00
Planning Area 4: East San Gabriel Valley	\$763.00
Planning Area 5: Southeast	\$766.00
Planning Area 6: Southwest	\$772.00
Planning Area 7: Santa Monica Mountains per dwelling unit	\$768.00

The direction of the Library system as it moves forward in the 21st Century is guided by a Strategic Plan, which can be viewed online at [www.colapublib.org/about/StrategicPlanBrochureRev.pdf](http://www.colapublib.org/about/StrategicPlanBrochureRev.pdf).

### Library Facilities Mitigation Fees

The County applies a library facilities mitigation fee to new residential development projects in unincorporated areas served by the County Public Library. This fee is intended to mitigate the significant adverse impacts of increased residential development on County public library facilities and services. The amount of the mitigation fee to be imposed on a residential development project is based on the findings and conclusions of the County Librarian in the “Report on Proposed Developer Fee Program for Library Facilities—Prepared by the County of Los Angeles Public Library, October 1998”. The mitigation fee program is codified in the Los Angeles County Code, Chapter 22.72.

The library facilities mitigation fee is uniform within each of the County’s seven (7) library planning areas and is based on the estimated cost of providing the projected library facility needs in each library planning area. **Table 9.3** shows these fees as of July 1, 2007.

The amount of the fee in each of the seven (7) planning areas is reviewed annually by the County Librarian, in consultation with the County Auditor-Controller, and is adjusted every July 1. No adjustment shall increase or

decrease the fee to an amount more or less than the amount necessary to recover the cost of providing applicable library facilities and services.

The provisions of the Library Facilities Mitigation fee ordinance are applicable to residential projects only. No tract map, parcel map, conditional use permit, other land use permit or other entitlement will be approved unless payment of the library facilities mitigation fee is made a condition

of approval for any such entitlement. All library facilities mitigation fees received by the County are deposited in a special library capital facilities fund (one for each library planning area) and expended solely for the purposes for which the fee was collected.

### Library Facility Needs

The majority of the County’s 84 existing libraries are under-sized and under-stocked to meet the service needs of both current and projected populations served by these libraries. A study conducted by the Library in April 2001 determined that many of the County’s existing libraries do not meet basic facility and service planning guidelines. The current guideline for library facility space is a minimum of 0.5 gross square foot per capita. The 2001 study determined that 89% of existing libraries will not meet that standard in the year



Los Angeles County Library Staff

2020, using population projections provided by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). In addition, by 2020, 77% of existing libraries will not meet the County Library's current service level planning guideline of 2.75 items (books and other library materials) per capita based on SCAG population projections.

While there is a clear need for the upgrading of existing Library facilities, many libraries are in areas that are not subject to the mitigation fee or are in areas with little or no new residential development. Therefore, there are no mitigation fees or other reliable sources of capital funding available to replace or expand existing libraries. Funding for an ongoing program to replace or expand existing facilities is needed to meet the projected population growth in the County Library's service area over the next two (2) decades.

## Goals, Policies, and Implementation Actions

### Goal PS-10

A County with a comprehensive public library system.

- **Policy PS 10.1:** Ensure a desired level of library service through coordinated land use and facility planning.
- **Policy PS 10.2:** Support phased development and mitigation fees for library facilities and services.

### Implementation Action PS 10.1

Explore having the County library online system have a link to County plans.

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# Chapter 10

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development Element provides a foundation from which to view unincorporated Los Angeles County's place in the regional economy, and to serve as a first step in supporting economic strategies and policies that contribute to the financial well-being of County residents and businesses.

From its origins as a sparsely populated, agricultural County, Los Angeles County, as the heart of the Southern California region, has developed into a national and global economic center. Today, the County's economy is diverse, dynamic, and fast-changing, but the predominance of a global economy means that competition for economic resources from other metropolitan areas, nationally and globally, requires that the County be prepared to accommodate and plan for the jobs of the future.

The Department of Regional Planning (DRP) recognizes that the performance of the economy plays an important role in how the land use and development patterns of the County will be implemented over the next 20 years. The goals and policies of this Element are based upon the idea that economic development will be important in maintaining the quality of the County's physical and social environments, and that there is a need to strategically plan for the economies of tomorrow. Finally, the Economic Development Element provides clear direction, through policies and implementation actions, to foster economic development in the County and to direct resources to those communities in most need.

The primary objectives of the Economic Development Element are to:

- Describe the existing economic conditions in the County;
- Identify future economic trends through collaboration and data gathering with County stakeholders; and,
- Formulate a strategic economic development plan, with policies and implementation measures to:
  - Attract and diversify the local and regional economy through a variety of County development incentives and strategic economic planning;
  - Foster the physical development and redevelopment of vacant and underutilized areas throughout the County;
  - Provide for the physical and geographic land use needs to accommodate the County's economic strategies; and,
  - Identify and implement strategies to accommodate the jobs of tomorrow.

## II. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

Los Angeles County's historical growth patterns, defined by sprawling single-family tracts with scattered commercial and industrial uses, has strongly influenced the County's economic configuration and development. In fact, construction and land use development have been and continue to be a primary component of the County's economic base.

The entertainment industry was the next major economic base to emerge in the County, and like land use development, it remains a primary component of the regional economy. While the entertainment industry has long been an iconic and stable symbol of the Los Angeles economy, the aerospace industry has been responsible for some of the County's major growth spurts. The County's mild climate made it an ideal testing ground for flying and aerospace research.

By the 1960's, it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of the County's workforce and nearly half of its manufacturing base was related to aerospace research and development.

The 1990's, however, saw the acceleration of major economic, social, and environmental trends that have transformed the County's economy. First, the end of the Cold War saw a nationwide decrease in defense spending, which hit Los Angeles County especially hard. Second, free trade agreements and globalization has meant that local, regional, state, and national-level economies have become more integrated into a global economic structure, where competition with overseas producers with cheaper labor and production costs has resulted in a major transference of manufacturing jobs out of the County. Lastly, the riots and earthquakes of the early 1990's resulted in a major exodus of business and industry from the region, and only recently have total job numbers in the County reached 1990 levels.



Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach

Ever resilient, the Los Angeles County economy has adapted and is much more diversified than 25 years ago. The current structure, trends, and existing conditions of the economy in the County are outlined in the following sections.

### III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Community Development Commission of the County of Los Angeles (CDC) is the County's primary economic development entity and is largely responsible for implementation of the County's economic development policies and programs in the unincorporated County. The Community Development Commission and the Department of Regional Planning will work collaboratively on new economic development programs and projects that create an environment that is conducive to the establishment and expansion of businesses and that benefits the unincorporated County.

The Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) was established in 1981 by the County of Los Angeles as a public/private partnership whose mission is to attract, retain, and expand businesses and jobs in the County. The LAEDC publishes well-respected semi-annual economic forecasts for Los Angeles County by compiling data and research from a variety of sources, and providing analyses of key employment sectors and sub-regions of economic activity. LAEDC data, along with the Southern California Association of Governments, (SCAG) annual



Film Crew, Marina del Rey



report, *The State of the Region 2007*, and reports from the Los Angeles Economic Roundtable and the Milken Institute are the primary sources for the analysis of the County's existing economic conditions.

### Economic Sectors and Jobs

Increased population growth, especially in the immigrant population, has transformed Los Angeles County's economic landscape. In addition to the growing contributions of the entertainment industry, international trade, tourism, financial services, and the technology sector, the County's employment base has been increasingly affected by small business owners and ethnic-owned small businesses, which have offset blue-collar losses in the manufacturing sector.

Current data reveals that the County has gained jobs in recent years, but the total number of jobs in the County has just recently rebounded to the 1990 level (SCAG, p. 28; Flaming, p. 1). The largest growth sectors in terms of jobs are professional, scientific and technical services, health services, and retail trade (LAEDC (a), p. 26). The County continues to have a net decrease in durable goods manufacturing and construction jobs, and a weakening housing sector will continue to affect the regional economy (LAEDC (a), p. 26).

The regional trend of job losses in the manufacturing sector continues to be an important planning issue. Southern California leaders have made significant efforts to retain manufacturing activities in the region. To an extent, they have had some success as Los Angeles County continues to be the largest manufacturing center in the U.S. (SCAG, p. 31). However, in addition to moving overseas, manufacturing jobs in Los Angeles County are also relocating to inland areas and other states due to lower production costs.

### Sub-Regional Economies

The economies and economic conditions of individual communities throughout the unincorporated County vary greatly. For example, the northern part of the unincorporated County is rural in nature and some rely on agricultural activities for a large part of their economy. In contrast, urban communities in the southern part of the unincorporated County are very dependent on the high-tech and service sector economies of the City of Los Angeles as well as from trade activities through the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX). Additionally, economic and monetary resources

vary greatly across communities in the County. As such, the County recognizes the need not only for programs and policies that benefit the entire County, but also the need to create unique programs that target specific communities and specific economic conditions for the more distressed communities of the County.

The following discussion provides a general overview of the sub-regional economies of Los Angeles County:

#### Antelope Valley

Located in North LA County, the Antelope Valley consists of two (2) cities and twelve (12) unincorporated areas covering more than 1,000 square miles. The largest economic sectors in the Antelope Valley include government employment, retail services, and manufacturing, in large part due to the major concentration of aerospace research and development activity in the Valley (LAEDC (a), p. 43). The Antelope



Downtown Los Angeles Redevelopment

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Valley has a lower cost of doing business than many other Southern California cities with pro-business governments in addition to special incentive zones. The Antelope Valley economy will be affected by several important factors: 1) An increasing number of environmental constraints, such as extreme water shortages, have the potential to significantly curtail all types of development in the Valley; 2) Relative to the rest of Los Angeles County, the Antelope Valley still has affordable land that is available for development, yet over 65,000 residents must commute significant distances to jobs elsewhere; and, 3) The idea of locating an “Inland Port” to handle trade near the newly re-opened LA/Palmdale Regional Airport may provide the Valley with an important economic opportunity if needed infrastructure can be implemented. Challenges include limited transportation options, perceived problems with crime, and a significant jobs-to-housing imbalance.

### Downtown Los Angeles

The downtown business core includes major corporations and professional firms, tourist and convention hotels, restaurants, retail, and the largest concentration of government offices outside of Washington DC. New non-residential construction projects will provide additional cultural and tourist opportunities. Challenges include transportation and congestion, low industrial and office vacancy rates, and a trend towards the conversion of industrially zoned property to residential and mixed uses.



Commercial Corridor, East Los Angeles

### East Los Angeles

The East Los Angeles region is seeing very little economic growth coupled with a significant loss of manufacturing, which has been a historically stable economic presence in the area. Government employment and educational health services are important economic sectors due to the presence of Cal State Los Angeles, the County/USC Medical Center, and the USC School of Medicine (LAEDC (a), p. 44). There are two major economic opportunities arising in the East Los Angeles region. The first is a joint redevelopment



City Walk at Universal City, San Fernando Valley

project between the City of Los Angeles and the County Community Development Commission to combine redevelopment areas in each jurisdiction to create a high-tech biomedical park. The second opportunity involves the expansion of the Gold Line to East Los Angeles, which can spur residential and commercial growth around the new light rail stations.

### Gateway Cities

Located in southeast Los Angeles County, the Gateway cities consists of 27 incorporated cities and small pockets of unincorporated communities. The region is a hub for high technology, tourism, trade, transportation, and manufacturing. California State



University Long Beach and Dominguez Hills and five community colleges provide degrees and state-of-the-art training in manufacturing and other business skills. One of the primary constraints for economic growth in the Gateway Cities is a shortage of large blocks of developable land, and worsening traffic congestion, especially on the I-710 freeway, which is the primary trucking route for cargo moving to and from the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

### **San Fernando Valley**

Covering nearly 300 square miles, the San Fernando Valley is a major center for entertainment, tourism, professional and business services, education, health services, and manufacturing. California State University Northridge and four (4) community colleges work closely with the private sector to train the Valley's workforce of more than 750,000 people. Challenges facing the San Fernando Valley include a decline in manufacturing, shortage of industrial and office space, and worsening traffic congestion.

### **San Gabriel Valley**

Located just east of downtown Los Angeles and about 200 square miles in size, the San Gabriel Valley includes 31 cities and five (5) unincorporated communities. The San Gabriel Valley is currently losing jobs in manufacturing while gaining jobs in the international trade sectors. The biggest economic sectors in the sub-region are professional and business services, retail, educational and health services, and international trade (LAEDC (a), p. 44). The presence of

Cal Tech, Cal Poly Pomona, University of La Verne, Azusa Pacific University, Art Center College of Design, and the Claremont McKenna Colleges are important economic generators in the sub-region. The City of Hope Medical Center and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) make the San Gabriel Valley one of the leaders in unique research activities. Like the Gateway Cities sub-region, a primary constraint for economic growth in the San Gabriel Valley is a growing shortage of large blocks of developable land, and worsening traffic congestion on the I-710 freeway. Transportation and transportation improvements will be very important for the long-term economic health of the San Gabriel Valley. A potential economic opportunity for the region is to consider reuse strategies for redeveloping under-utilized commercial or industrial areas for mixed uses, or to adapt outdated industrial pockets to accommodate new and growing industrial sectors.

### **Santa Clarita Valley**

The Santa Clarita Valley is experiencing an increase in jobs, but not enough economic growth to provide the needed jobs-to-housing balance. Many people in the region must still commute great distances for their employment. The biggest economic sectors in the Valley are professional and business services, with several growing industries including biomedical, entertainment, technology, and aerospace manufacturing, due to the availability of land and facilities (LAEDC (a), p. 43) and a qualified workforce. Environmental impacts and traffic congestion related to increased development activities will be a hindrance on economic development, especially the availability of water.

### **South Bay**

Covering 161 square miles, the South Bay consists of 15 cities and one (1) unincorporated area, and is home to numerous headquarter offices, aerospace research, development and manufacturing, high technology, health care, telecommunications, financial services, and international trade. Exceptional educational institutions such as Pepperdine University, Loyola Marymount, Cal State Dominguez Hills and several community colleges provide degrees and training programs to meet the needs of industry. Issues facing South Bay include traffic congestion and a lack of developable industrial space.



Development Remains Strong in the Santa Clarita Valley

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Marina del Rey is a Strong Economic Engine for the County on the Westside

### South Los Angeles

For several years, the South Los Angeles sub-region has seen no growth in total employment numbers, holding steady at 85,000 jobs, a significant drop from the approximately 96,000 jobs from before the 1992 Los Angeles riots (LAEDC (a), p. 46). The largest industry in the area is still manufacturing, a potential source of new jobs and revenue for the regional economy if plans are made to maintain and expand upon the area's manufacturing base. The other major industries include education and health services, and retail trade (LAEDC (a), p. 46). The constraints and challenges for economic development in South Los Angeles are numerous and acute. The only available land to develop is infill and many of these lots have a combination of environmental issues that affect their redevelopment potential. Much of the South Los Angeles region is also characterized by blighted and economically distressed conditions that further hamper private investment and redevelopment. Finally, the recent closing of the King Drew Medical Center is a major economic blow to the region. Public investment in redevelopment activities will be an important component in the economic turn-around of the South Los Angeles region.

### Westside

Located between the Pacific Ocean and the Santa Monica Mountains, the Westside region is an epicenter for creativity and tourism. The economy of Westside Los Angeles County is based on the entertainment industry, leisure and hospitality services, professional services, entrepreneurialism,

and design. (LAEDC (a), p. 44). Westside Los Angeles has very low office vacancy rates and high rents. A constraint on economic opportunities is strong community opposition to new growth and facility expansions. Residents are concerned that new growth will worsen the already severe traffic congestion that plagues the area. Economic opportunities for new development, however, are being looked at along the new Exposition Line that will bring rail transit to the Westside.

## IV. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

The following discussion summarizes important issues and economic trends affecting the Los Angeles County regional economy, which will provide the rationale for a countywide, coordinated economic development strategy:

### Decentralized Economic Planning

Leading stakeholders in Los Angeles County agree that historically Los Angeles County has not had a cohesive, regional strategy for economic development. Without this guiding leadership, the County continues to lack a unified vision for economic development that is necessary to facilitate joint efforts between businesses and political leaders to capitalize on emerging trends, organize effective policy, and coordinate resources (Flaming, p. 3). With support from the County, the LAEDC, as a leading County entity focused on providing a vision of the County's economic

future, can bring together its member businesses, cities, and education institutions to facilitate business and industry growth, and emphasize collaboration with the County's major universities and labor pools.

### Global and Regional Competition

Increased global competition has resulted in tighter profit margins for entire economic sectors. Increased access to global inputs, such as labor and materials, has made production methods more mobile. In Los Angeles County, there is a real concern that the lack of progressive and coordinated land use planning and an “un-friendly” (high production costs, high utility costs, strict environmental regulations, and a perceived hostility to industrial use) business environment is resulting in the relocation of industries to places such as Nevada and Arizona, where incentives are attracting industries and businesses to locate in their States (LAEDC(c), p. 3-13).

### Infrastructure

Much of the physical infrastructure of Los Angeles County is strained, aging, and has surpassed its operating capacity. Major transportation networks, such as the freeways leading out of the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, are congested and face community opposition to expansion efforts. The ports, along with LAX, are crowded with cargo and passenger freight with limited expansion opportunities. Compared to other regions the County has higher utility and energy costs (LAEDC(c), p. 3-13), and there are concerns

from the business community that the energy network is insufficient to meet the demands of the current population and business community during peak energy periods (LAEDC(c), p. 4-23). One key component of economic development is mobility, and the current transportation system and transportation infrastructure of Los Angeles County will be a hindrance to development efforts and business activities unless it is made more efficient. Business and industry require efficient road, rail, shipping, and air networks to transport goods and services. Continued strain, delays, and congestion on our transportation systems will increasingly put the County at an economic disadvantage. Compounding the issue, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development estimates that the transportation sector accounts for one-quarter of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and is growing by 2% each year. There must be a coordinated plan to address mobility issues in the County and to understand its importance in economic development. Public funds, leveraged with private investment, will be important to building infrastructure, such as the Alameda Corridor East (ACE), which will enhance the County's transportation capacity and facilitate the County's competitive edge.

### Land Use

Historical land use patterns in the County have helped to shape a landscape that many business leaders call “unfriendly”. Sprawl-like growth patterns that include low density commercial and industrial development have consumed much of the available land in the County, with several unintended consequences. Energy and environmental issues, compounded by sprawling development, are increasing obstacles to new growth. One major land use issue affecting economic development in the County is the availability and adequacy of industrial and office park lands (LAEDC(c), p. 4-25). Flexible land use and zoning practices have resulted in a large number of industrial parcels being used for commercial and residential purposes, and the majority of the County's industrial and high-tech office space is unable to accommodate the new growth industries and research needs of emerging sector businesses.

### Economic Growth

A significant portion of the growth in the Los Angeles County economy the last fifteen (15) years has been in the “informal” economy driven by the continuing stream of immigrants to the area (Milken Institute, p. 9). The other growth areas have been the proliferation of low wage service and retail jobs (Flaming, p. 2; Milken Institute, p. 2).



Housing Development on Industrial Land, West Carson

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These trends are problematic, in that low-wage, service-related jobs are not employment sectors that can support a family in Los Angeles County, which has a comparably high cost of living. A second issue is that although the growth of small and ethnic-owned businesses have been an important factor in the County's economy, they have limited growth potential and limited access to the capital needed to expand the County's economic base (Milken Institute, p. 3). As such, despite the County's continued population growth, the number of jobs in the formal economy is still below the 1990 level, and the County must focus more efforts on attracting industries and jobs in the formal economy that will provide growth and multiplier effects.

### Government

Recent statistics show that local governments in Los Angeles County spend less than \$1 billion dollars annually on activities that are traditionally associated with economic development – job training, economic development and redevelopment (Flaming, p. 4). There is a consensus in the business community that unions, environmental groups,



Informal Economy, Flea Market

and NIMBYISM (Not In My Back Yard) strongly affect governmental action on land use development and regulatory actions related to the economy. Additionally, the business community is concerned that state and local political leaders are indifferent to businesses and economic development (LAEDC(c), p. 3-15). It is important that governments create a place for business to locate and create jobs, that governmental permitting and regulatory processes be better balanced with community planning efforts, and that local governments play a part in providing for a diverse and vibrant economic base to ensure long-term economic growth.

### Education

Although the County is well-positioned in terms of having several world-class higher educational institutions, surveys of the County's business leaders stress that the business community believes much of the blue-collar workforce is unprepared for the jobs of tomorrow, and that the County lacks training and workforce development programs to better improve the County labor pool. Continued globalization of the economy means that more and more local workers with marginal education will be unemployed or at risk of losing their jobs. Coupled with national and state government cuts to education on all levels, the growing unskilled workforce leaves the County at greater risk of losing its competitive edge to regions with a better educated and prepared labor pool.



Los Angeles Civic Center - Source: Pictometry International Corp



### Housing and Income

The County's high cost of living, inflated housing market, and a shortage of affordable housing has a major impact on the regional economy and economic development efforts. The Census Bureau reports that over 50% of Los Angeles County residents live in rental housing, and that a higher and higher percentage of the family income is being spent on housing costs (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006, American Community Survey; Flaming, p. 1). In addition, high housing costs are a deterrent in attracting the highly-valued, educated middle-class worker, an important component of sustained, long-term economic stability (LAEDC(c), p. 3-12, p. 3-17). Regional attention to building new housing at all income levels will be a primary factor in the success of the County's economic future.

## V. STRATEGIC ECONOMIC POLICIES

Through the Economic Development Element, the Department of Regional Planning, in coordination with other County departments and business community stakeholders, will focus its resources and policies on five (5) strategic economic policy areas, based on economic data and research from the county's leading economic development institutions. The five (5) strategic economic policy areas are:

1. Attracting, retaining, and expanding "target" industries to the County;
2. Improving County land use practices, including streamlining regulatory and permitting processes to encourage desired economic activity, and improving the efficiencies of existing infrastructure networks;
3. Expanding workforce development programs;
4. Promoting and implementing revitalization and redevelopment projects; and,
5. Facilitating cooperation and collaboration amongst County industry and business stakeholders.

These five (5) economic policy strategies are focused on actions that government departments and the Department of Regional Planning can take to affect economic development in the County. Following each strategy will be a list of action items that the County will pursue in reaching the objectives of each strategy.

### Strategy 1: Attracting Target Industries

The County will focus on attracting "target" industries and expanding prominent economic sectors that will provide a broad economic base with multiplier effects for the County's economy. A key component to the success of this policy will be the emergence of entities such as the LAEDC to guide the economic development goals of the entire County, with widespread participation among the 88 incorporated cities and other stakeholders, and to be an institution that tracks economic trends and emerging economic data in order to ensure the County's competitive advantages for attracting new businesses.

Based on current economic data and the County's competitive advantages, the following eight (8) target industries are considered to be the most promising for contributing to a broad-based, stable, and expanding economy for the County:



Housing Construction

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**1. Entertainment (Motion Picture & Television Production):** Los Angeles County is home to the internationally-recognized entertainment industry and is the site of major television and movie production activities, video game and digital entertainment production, and an increasing number of fine arts establishments and venues. The entertainment industry is an extremely important sector of the County's economy, and its high wages, multiplier impact, and numbers employed, from actors and production assistants to make-up artists, is often not well understood. Los Angeles County has seen a significant amount of its entertainment production move out of the region due to cheaper costs and competition from neighboring states that have recognized the economic benefits of entertainment production (LAEDC (a), p. 56). Additionally, there are a growing number of communities in the County voicing their discontent with the effects that filming and production have on their daily activities. The County must work to balance the need to retain entertainment production activities in the area and community concerns about the industry, but it must also continue to lobby for State incentives to keep entertainment production in California.

**2. Professional Business Services:** Professional business services include specialized expertise in accounting, business consulting, engineering and architecture, design, legal services, and research and development.



Hollywood Sign - Source: Pictometry International Corp

The County is ideally suited for these industries due to the overall size of the market, the presence of several major, top-tier universities, and a large design-oriented economic sector.

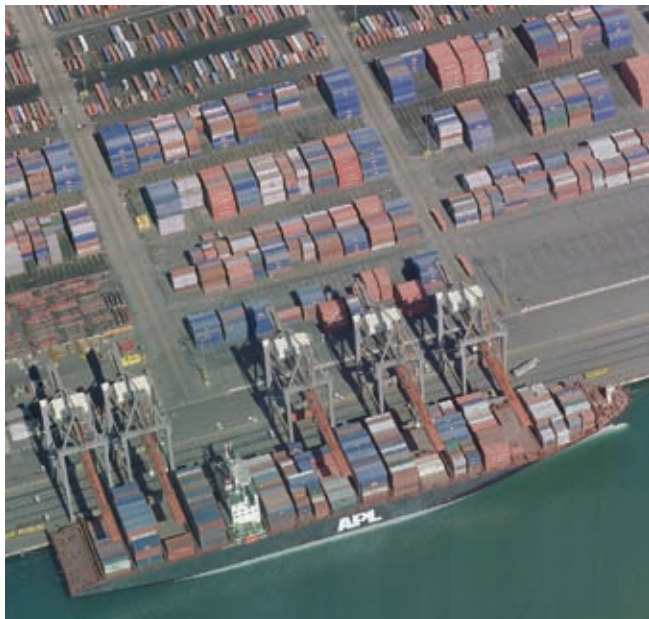
**3. Financial Services:** Although Los Angeles is not considered a national banking center, it is the largest middle market banking center in the United States and is home to a number of specialized banking services that can be capitalized on to promote economic development in the County. The proliferation of small businesses, ethnic and minority-owned businesses, and international trade makes Los Angeles an attractive market for large banks. In addition, there has been a growing number of "community" banking operations and an influx of overseas banks setting up branches in the County. Additionally, Los Angeles County has a competitively large number of venture capital firms (LAEDC (b), p. 5). Understanding and focusing on the existing strengths in the County's financial sector could further increase the County's reputation as a growing financial center.

Regional Center for Financial and Business Services, Downtown Los Angeles



**4. Trade and Logistics:** The Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, along with LAX, handle more cargo than any other region in the United States (SCAG, p. 79, 80). Existing trends and the projected growth of international cargo trade at the ports has vastly increased the proportion of the County's economy that is committed to logistics and trade activities despite the often unfavorable perceptions of local ports by shipping companies. The County must prioritize improving its infrastructure related to trade and goods movement to maintain its competitive hold on this sector, as well as to maintain and expand jobs. Additionally, further plans to promote and expand trade and goods movement in the County have the potential to produce significant economic returns. For example, facilitating the creation of an "Inland Port" near the newly reopened Palmdale Airport would alleviate congested conditions in the ports and airports of the South County while also providing a much-needed employment base in the North County. In order for an Inland Port to succeed, economical routes must be identified, and supported by infrastructure improvements.

**5. Health Sciences and Biomedical:** The Health Sciences and Biomedical sector represents a growing industry that provides high paying salaries and good multiplier effects on the local economy. Los Angeles County has yet to capitalize on this sector, in large part due to a lack of high-tech industrial or office space to accommodate



Goods Movement - Source: Pictometry International Corp

this industry (LAEDC(c), p. 5-32). Land use policy and redevelopment efforts that will provide opportunities for the development of the biomedical and health services sector will be an important component of attracting this target industry.

**6. Green Sector:** Green technology, or technology that works to promote alternative uses in energy, practices that expand energy saving opportunities, and businesses that work to improve environmental quality or the environmental sustainability of existing and new products, is a small but rapidly expanding economic sector. Political attention to climate change and pollution, and environmental conditions such as wildfires, extended periods of drought and water shortages, and endangered or threatened species protection are quickly changing the way land is developed and projects are built. As the major metropolitan area on the West Coast with a large labor pool, professional and academic resources, and local engineering companies, the County has an opportunity to be a leader in attracting and investing in the green sector.

**7. Specialized Manufacturing/Textiles/Fashion:** Despite recent losses in the number of manufacturing jobs, Los Angeles County remains the largest apparel manufacturing center in the country. The County has a strong design sector, with fashion and textiles as two of its most prominent components. Traditional apparel manufacturing jobs will continue to be transferred to locations with cheaper labor and production costs. However, the County has an advantage in producing quick-turn or small volume orders. As such, the County must focus its manufacturing policies to support its remaining manufacturing industries and promote high value-added manufacturing activity (LAEDC (a), p. 51; LAEDC(c), p. 5-32-33). Again, land use policy and the adaptation of the County's manufacturing space to these businesses will be important components in expanding this target industry.

**8. Tourism:** Southern California is an iconic location whose landscape has been channeled into homes all across the globe through television and movie productions. The County must continue to promote its new and improved cultural icons, such as the newly re-opened Getty Villa museum, the refurbished Griffith Observatory, or the iconic Walt Disney Concert

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Hall, and expand tourist destinations and opportunities. A countywide umbrella organization is needed to focus sub-county initiatives into effective regional efforts that promote a Los Angeles brand.

### Strategy 2: Improving Land Use Practices and Infrastructure Networks

Historical land use practices in the County, coupled with the downturn of the manufacturing sector, have resulted in a large percentage of industrial and office land to be occupied by commercial uses. In addition, the continued housing crunch in Southern California has put new pressure to convert under-utilized or vacant industrial land to residential uses. By allowing the conversion of industrial land to other uses, Los Angeles County risks losing the ability to have the available land needed to retain and attract industry and business in the future. Furthermore, allowing non-industrial uses to encroach on business parks and industrial areas increases tensions between the business community and residential neighborhoods, as industrial activities often produce noise, odor, smells, traffic congestion, and other environmental impacts that are not compatible with residential uses. The County and its many local governments must make a coordinated effort to preserve its remaining industrial land and protect it from incompatible uses.

The County's infrastructure, from transportation and energy provision to its freeways and ports, must be upgraded and updated to increase logistical efficiencies and to accommodate the targeted industries it wants to attract. Goods movement and trade logistics are a significant and growing economic sector, and the County must continue to implement major transportation projects to facilitate goods movement and to lessen the environmental impacts of industry. Mobility networks, for goods and for people, are a primary element of successful economic development, and the County risks losing business if congestion on its freeways and ports continues to worsen. An enormous amount of attention is paid to the negative effects of traffic congestion on employee commutes, but less so on the significant impacts it has on business operations. Traffic congestion, compounded by the County's aging infrastructure, is a critical economic obstacle for local businesses in the County. Similarly, the County's industrial lands and office space need to be retrofitted to accommodate the new targeted industries, or land must be set aside and planned to allow the County's economic base to grow. Projects such as the Alameda Corridor, which allows for the transport



Infrastructure Improvements

of freight on a dedicated rail-line to inland transfer yards, is a good example of a project that improves the County's transportation infrastructure while also mitigating the environmental impacts of trucking and trade activities.

Plans and programs that mitigate the environmental impacts of heavy industrial activities will be another key element for economic development. Infrastructure capacity in the County must be improved in order to meet a growing population and maintain a growing economic base. Needed infrastructure projects must be balanced with high profile public opposition to expansion efforts of some of the County's primary transportation networks and economic hubs, such as the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, LAX, and the I-710 Freeway leading into and out of the Ports. Government attention to mitigating and buffering the impact of industry will be important to attracting and retaining valuable industries in the County.

Government plays an important role in economic development, as both a funding source and an instrument to facilitate public-private partnerships and investment. Government also has the ability to promote, facilitate, and strengthen all of the economic policies in this economic development strategic plan.

Governments also have two (2) policy tools that can greatly influence the success of any economic development strategy. The first is the ability to influence land use and to plan

for the jobs of tomorrow by developing communities that accommodate new business and industry through zoning, land use practices, and the provision of incentives. The planning process related to land use development is too often cumbersome, costly, and extremely time consuming, which are all deterrents for attracting target industries. The second important policy tool that governments' wield is the power to regulate the planning process. In order to effectively target new industries, and to revitalize and redevelop economically distressed communities, the County and other local governments must be willing to adapt and streamline their regulatory and planning permitting processes. Streamlining regulations and permitting processes is a direct action government can take to facilitate business and economic development. It is important for governments to focus on streamlining permitting processes to attract targeted business and industry, versus creating an environment for unregulated and haphazard industrial development.

### Strategy 3: Expanding Workforce Development Programs

The County's workforce is disproportionately unskilled, and the industries that will supply the most promising economic returns involve a knowledge base and technical skills that are significantly different than the region's historical manufacturing jobs. Without a commitment to

education and workforce development, the gap between the County's labor pool and the workforce needed for the jobs of tomorrow will continue to widen.

Workforce development opportunities must be targeted to the numerous major universities, colleges, and other research institutions in the County, but also the community colleges, high schools, non-profits, and local job training centers. Workforce development programs must be varied and widespread to reach the numerous pockets of underemployed or unemployed residents in the County and should include on-the-job training, functional literacy, poverty reduction, English-as-a-second language (ESL), business incubation, and mentoring. Furthermore, it is important to continually refine the County's workforce training programs to match the needs of emerging industries and new technologies.

### Strategy 4: Revitalization and Redevelopment

Local governments have a major role to play in the revitalization and redevelopment of neighborhoods that are economically distressed. Los Angeles County has a significant number of neighborhoods that can be classified as economically distressed, and government must focus its resources on promoting opportunities for redevelopment and diversifying local economies in these areas. Economically distressed neighborhoods provide vital opportunities for redevelopment activities that can attract major new industries and businesses, but it is equally important to utilize environmental and social justice principles in all redevelopment projects.

The primary agency responsible for promoting the unincorporated County's economic development and redevelopment activities is the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission. The following discussion summarizes current Community Development Commission redevelopment and economic development activities.

#### Community Development Commission

The Community Development Commission supports local economies in Los Angeles County by promoting business growth and encouraging job creation and retention through a variety of programs, revitalization efforts, incubators, redevelopment areas, economic incentives, and commercial and industry lending.



Infill Development, East Los Angeles

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The County Board of Supervisors (BOS) serves as the Commissioners of the Community Development Commission and sets the policy direction for the agency. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006-2007, the Economic Redevelopment Division of the Community Development Commission had a budget of \$34 million and a total staff of 27 employees. Most of the Commission's funding comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The Community Development Commission is responsible for numerous programs that promote economic development in the County. They include:

- **Business Incubator Program:** Supports business incubation efforts that create new business opportunities in the County;
- **Redevelopment project areas:** Assembles sites for new development and redevelopment. As of 2007, five (5) redevelopment project areas have been established in West Altadena, Maravilla and Whiteside (East Los Angeles), Willowbrook, and East Rancho Dominguez;
- **Community Business Revitalization (CBR) Program:** Provides financial and technical assistance to the 1st and 2nd Districts to renovate storefronts and facades in unincorporated County areas and seeks to help beautify business districts through streetscape enhancements making them more inviting for shoppers and a source of community pride;
- **Enterprise Zone Program:** The Commission has successfully competed for Enterprise Zone designations under the state program that provides tax credits to employers and intends to compete for further designations in the future;
- **Streetscapes:** CDC streetscape projects provide traffic calming mitigation measures to highly congested commercial corridors and enhance pedestrian safety while beautifying the area; and,

- **Loan Programs:** The Community Development Commission supports local economies through a variety of commercial and industrial loan programs including the County Business Loan Program, County Development Loan Program, County Technology Loan Program, and the County Earthquake Loan Program.

The CDBG Division of the Community Development Commission administers the Los Angeles Urban County CDBG Program on behalf of the County of Los Angeles and participating cities. Initiated by the U. S. Congress in 1974 as part of the Housing and Community Development Act, the program is funded directly by HUD. CDBG funds have been used to finance a wide variety of economic development activities including technical assistance, façade improvements, employment training, and forgivable loans and grants for businesses.

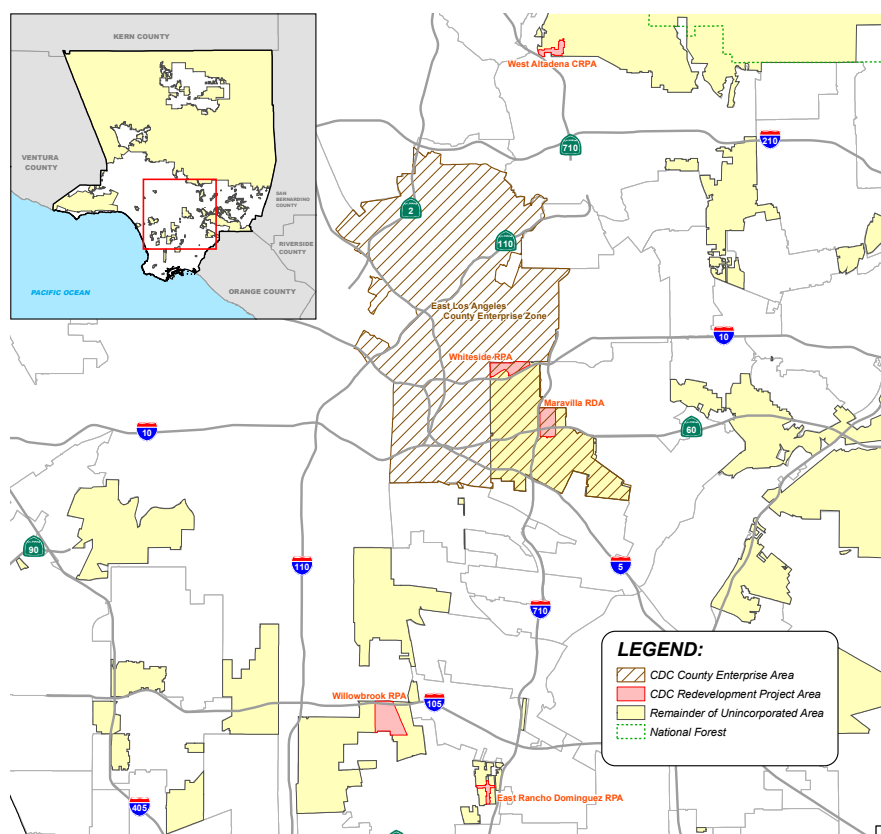


Figure 10.1: Unincorporated County Redevelopment Areas



**Table 10.1: Unincorporated County Redevelopment Areas**

<b>Maravilla</b>	Adopted on February 20, 1973, the Project Area is comprised of approximately 214 acres and is generally bounded on the north by Floral Drive, on the south by Third Street, on the west by Ford Boulevard, and on the east by Mednik Avenue. The Redevelopment Plan has a 40-year duration and contains various land uses including residential, commercial, and public/quasi public.
<b>Willowbrook Community</b>	Adopted on October 16, 1977, and subsequently amended on May 14, 1991 and November 22, 1994, the Project Area is comprised of approximately 365 acres generally bounded on the north by Imperial Highway, on the south by El Segundo Boulevard, on the west by Compton Avenue, and on the east by Willowbrook Avenue. The Redevelopment Plan has a 35-year duration and contains various land uses including residential, commercial, and public/quasi public.
<b>East Rancho Dominguez</b>	Adopted on June 26, 1984, the Project Area is located on a 58-acre portion of unincorporated East Compton. The Project Area runs generally along Atlantic Avenue from Alondra Boulevard to the Compton City limit and along Compton Boulevard from Harris Avenue to Williams Avenue. The Redevelopment Plan has a 40-year duration and principally contains commercial and light manufacturing/industrial uses.
<b>West Altadena Community</b>	Adopted August 12, 1986, the Project Area is located in the unincorporated Altadena area. The community of Altadena surrounds the Project Area on the north, east and west, while the city of Pasadena lies to the south. The Project Area boundaries encompass about 80 acres. The Redevelopment Plan has a 40-year duration and contains various land uses including residential, commercial, and public/semi-public.
<b>Whiteside</b>	Adopted on October 17, 2006, the Project Area is comprised of approximately 171 acres and is generally bounded on the north by Worth Street, on the south by Whiteside Street/San Bernardino Freeway, on the west by Indiana Street, and on the east by Eastern Avenue. The Redevelopment Plan has a 30-year duration and contains various land uses including heavy and light industrial, commercial, residential, and public/semi-public. The merger with the City of Los Angeles' Adelante Eastside Redevelopment Project Area will form a larger "BioMedTech Focus Area".

Source: LA County Community Development Commission, 2007

**Redevelopment Areas and Enterprise Zones**

The California Enterprise Zone Program targets economically distressed areas using special state and local incentives to promote business investment and job creation. Businesses within Enterprise Zones are eligible for substantial tax credits and benefits, including:

- State tax credits for each qualified employee hired;
- Sales tax credits on purchases of \$20 million per year of qualified machinery;
- Up-front expensing of certain depreciable property; and,
- The carrying forward of up to 100% of a business' Net Operating Loss (NOL).

In January of 2008, the Community Development Commission, in a collaborative application with the City of Los Angeles, received confirmation from the State Department of Housing and Community Development that East Los Angeles will be designated as an Enterprise Zone. In addition, applications for Enterprise Zone designations are currently underway for Florence-Firestone and Willowbrook.

The Community Development Commission currently has five (5) redevelopment areas (see **Figure 10.1**). **Table 10.1** provides a general description of each County redevelopment area. A redevelopment area has a legal connotation and is generally defined as an area that is found to be blighted, both physically and economically, and is predominantly urbanized. Blighted areas are further characterized as having a combination of adverse conditions so prevalent and substantial that it constitutes a serious physical and economical burden on the community that cannot reasonably be expected to be reversed or alleviated by private enterprise or government action, or both, without redevelopment. **Table 10.2** provides a series of redevelopment projects administered by the Community Development Commission. The Commission is continually examining opportunities to expand the use of redevelopment in blighted communities.

The Department of Regional Planning and the Community Development Commission are instrumental in promoting policies and programs that will positively affect the economic development and land use of the unincorporated areas of the County. The General Plan provides several

**Table 10.2: Community Development Commission Redevelopment Projects.**

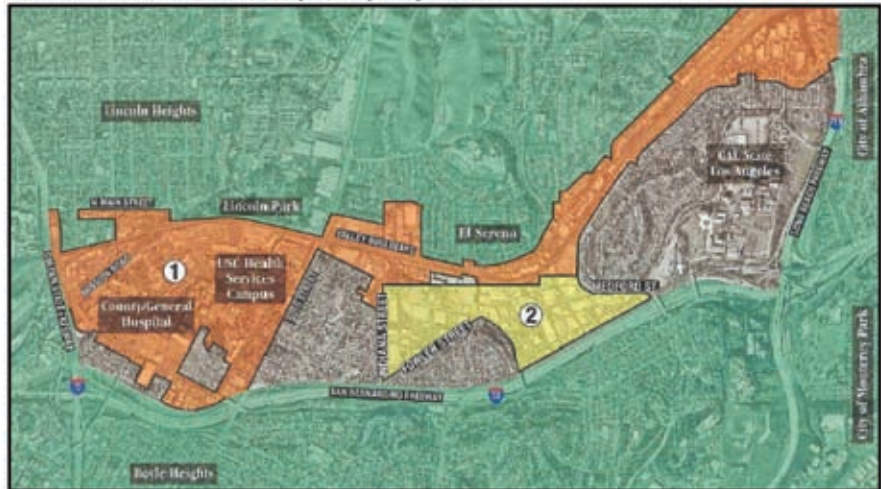
<b>Centro Estrella East Los Angeles</b>	Located at 4701 E. Cesar Chavez Avenue, in unincorporated East Los Angeles, Centro Estrella is an approximately 23,000 square-foot, two-story building and independent pool building. Approximately \$5,500,000 of Maravilla Tax Increment, Community Development Block Grant and State Realignment Funds were used to fund construction of Centro Estrella. Two tenants occupy the Centro Estrella - the Department of Mental Health and ALMA Family Services. The center is intended to provide disabled children, their families and the community at large with much needed services.
<b>The Village Willowbrook</b>	This development, located at 2003 E. 120th Street, Los Angeles, is comprised of 34 new, two-story single-family detached homes with three or four bedrooms. A total of 23 units were assisted with secondary financing and the remaining 11 units were sold at market rate. The units were sold at prices ranging from \$185,000 to \$205,000.
<b>Altadena Lincoln Crossing West Altadena</b>	The first phase of the Altadena Lincoln Crossing project is located on five acres at the northwest corner of Lincoln Avenue and Woodbury Road in unincorporated West Altadena. The project houses a 37,500 square-foot supermarket, a 37,000 square-foot 24 Hour Fitness sports club, 25,500 feet of retail uses, a parking structure, and residential loft housing.
<b>Civic Center Plaza East Los Angeles</b>	The East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza is a commercial center with business and community tenants. The Plaza is located at the corner of 3rd Street and Mednik Avenue in unincorporated East Los Angeles. The Plaza replaced incompatible uses and removed blighted properties with 30,000 square feet of new office, retail, and food space. The Community Development Commission provided over \$1.6 million in Maravilla Tax Increment funds for land acquisition, off-site improvements, and other project activities.

policies that reflect the need for a collaborative and cooperative working relationship between the two (2) agencies to provide best practices for economic development in the County.

### Strategy 5: Collaboration and Implementation

Although Los Angeles County will continue to be an economic and cultural destination, it can no longer be assumed that development and economic growth will come to the County as easily or naturally as it has in the past. Land use patterns, the relative build-out of the County, strong neighborhood coalitions, and the County's extremely large number of local governments makes collaboration on economic development policy very difficult. The County recognizes the need for a leadership entity such as the LAEDC to guide economic development on a countywide and regional level, to collect and distribute infor-

mation on growth and market trends, and to facilitate cooperation among jurisdictions to implement long-term goals for shaping the economy.

**Figure 10.2****BioMedTech Focus Area County & City Project Areas**

- 1) Adelante Eastside Redevelopment Project Area (LA City)  
2) Whiteside Redevelopment Project Area (LA County)

Figure 10.2: County and City of Los Angeles BioMedTech Focus Area

The County will increase its outreach to business leaders and community groups in its jurisdiction as well as to other County departments to implement long-term economic development goals and strategies. Additionally, the Department of Regional Planning has taken a lead in collaboration efforts with the County's Community Development Commission and the City of Los Angeles to develop strategic economic policy that transcends city boundaries and benefits countywide efforts for economic growth and development.

One successful example of the County's collaborative outreach efforts is the Whiteside Redevelopment Project Area "BioMedTech Focus Area," which is a joint redevelopment effort between the Community Development Commission and Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles (CRA/LA). The Focus Area is comprised of approximately 750 acres of the City's 2,164-acre Adelante Eastside Redevelopment Project Area and the County's 171-acre Whiteside Redevelopment Project Area. The Focus Area is shown in **Figure 10.2**.

The County General Hospital and the USC Health Sciences Campus physically and economically dominate the area, with more than 5,000 employees and students directly associated with both institutions, and the Cal State LA campus lies directly to the east of the Focus Area. In addition, construction of the new 600-bed County hospital makes the old 20-story, 1,000,000 square-foot County General Hospital available for adaptive reuse.

Although the Focus Area benefits from its proximity to County and university resources, the ability to maximize the sites economic development opportunities is inhibited by overlapping governmental jurisdictions, mixed and sometimes incompatible land uses, and the lack of an overall vision for what the area can be. Therefore, the goal of the County and City Redevelopment Agency partnership would be to address these jurisdictional, land use planning, and physical infrastructure challenges in order to facilitate mixed use and retail development, including new job growth opportunities in the burgeoning fields of biomedical research and health care.

## VI. GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

The following goals, policies and implementation actions related to economic development are designed to facilitate the strategies outlined in this element to promote economic development and growth.

### Goal ED-1

A County with a growing and balanced economic base with the ability to attract targeted, valuable industries and businesses.

- **Policy ED 1.1:** Provide a diverse mix of industries and services in each geographic area.
- **Policy ED 1.2:** Expand the economic infrastructure of the County to accommodate the needs of existing and target industries and support overall growth.
- **Policy ED 1.3:** Identify ways to make the County more cost-competitive.
- **Policy ED 1.4:** Assist in the expansion, retention and recruitment of high-wage, environmentally friendly and carbon neutral, and targeted industries providing career track ladders with a variety of quality jobs.
- **Policy ED 1.5:** Encourage and foster the development of the green economic sector, such as the renewable energy industry.
- **Policy ED 1.6:** Support and encourage public-private partnerships to enhance incubation and commercialization opportunities to support growth of target industries.
- **Policy ED 1.7:** Support legislative proposals and other actions which would encourage the expansion and retention of targeted industries and other valuable economic sectors, such as the entertainment industry.
- **Policy ED 1.8:** Facilitate an outreach campaign to promote Los Angeles County as a national and international locale for business and development.

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- **Policy ED 1.9:** Increase communication and coordination with relevant local, regional and state public and private economic development agencies to leverage resources and coordinate economic policy.
- **Policy ED 1.10:** Increase support for local, national, and international marketing efforts to promote Los Angeles County's strengths and assets related to targeted industries.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.1***

Inventory the unincorporated County's existing industrial land against the backdrop of a comprehensive analysis of the entire County's commercial real estate market to determine the areas of need for development or expansion.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.2***

Coordinate with LAEDC on meetings with real estate professionals, site locator service providers, and economic development professional to gather information on the land use and building needs of emerging industries and businesses.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.3***

Review County regulatory policies, procedures, and compliance costs to ensure that the County is a competitive location for business establishment and expansion, and market these findings.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.4***

Develop a promotional campaign that targets foreign-owned enterprises from sectors currently doing business within the County with the intent to attract them to establish operations in the County (Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Program).

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***Implementation Action ED 1.5***

Work with the LAEDC to produce visual marketing and public relations materials that promote and advertise County policies that will facilitate in-fill development and smart growth. Examples include:

- Mixed Use Development Ordinance
- TOD Development
- Density Bonuses

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***Implementation Action ED 1.6***

Develop an unincorporated Los Angeles County Business Solutions website that guides developers and the business community through the County planning and permitting process.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.7***

Work with the LAEDC to collect information on County economic and business trends and conditions to determine needs and respond to changes.

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***Implementation Action ED 1.8***

Utilize federal, state and local resources to create economic and regulatory incentives to attract targeted industries and to promote sustainable development policies.

## Goal ED-2

Land use practices, government regulations and infrastructure networks that foster economic development and growth.

- **Policy ED 2.1:** Ensure high standards of development and environmental justice in economic development activities.
- **Policy ED 2.2:** Protect industrial, high-tech research and office space lands from the encroachment of incompatible uses.
- **Policy ED 2.3:** Ensure adequate buffering and other land use practices to minimize industrial land use effects on neighboring uses.
- **Policy ED 2.4:** Encourage employment opportunities proximate to housing as a way to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- **Policy ED 2.5:** Fund transportation infrastructure and multimodal systems that make economic activities more efficient and energy conscious.
- **Policy ED 2.6:** Support efforts to ensure transportation investments include goods movement and other business needs.
- **Policy ED 2.7:** Support strategic infrastructure investment and the continued expansion of state-of-the-art telecommunications and wireless technologies for County businesses.
- **Policy ED 2.8:** Encourage and incentivize infill development of vacant and underutilized sites as well as brownfield, greyfield and other environmentally-challenged sites throughout the County.
- **Policy ED 2.9:** Incentivize development along existing public transportation corridors and toward the urban core.
- **Policy ED 2.10:** Streamline the permit review process for targeted businesses and industries.

### Implementation Action ED 2.1

Implement an industrial land preservation policy that restricts re-zoning of industrially-zoned land to other uses without formal consideration and recognition of how and where that industrial land will be replaced within the County.

### Implementation Action ED 2.2

Change land use policy language and zoning codes to minimize the ability to convert valuable industrial and office space lands to other land uses, retaining its land for job-producing uses.

### Implementation Action ED 2.3

Implement changes to the planning and permit process to facilitate and expedite redevelopment activities and economic development for the county's targeted businesses and industries, utilizing best practices, such as applying for permits and scheduling inspection appointments online, to make the process timely, accountable, customer-driven and predictable.

### Implementation Action ED 2.4

Explore implementing a program that will provide for community benefits and jobs/housing balance when land is converted to residential from industrial.

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### Goal ED-3

A skilled and well-educated work force.

- **Policy ED 3.1:** Support a quality education system at all levels through regulatory and financial policies.
- **Policy ED 3.2:** Support and create collaborative educational programs that address specific under-employed populations and workforce needs in targeted areas.
- **Policy ED 3.3:** Initiate a variety of vocational training programs across the County.
- **Policy ED 3.4:** Work with the employment sector to identify growing work force needs and training opportunities.
- **Policy ED 3.5:** Link workforce training initiatives to the business needs of target industries.
- **Policy ED 3.6:** Conduct expanded outreach efforts to educational and community-learning institutions to foster expanded workforce education programs.
- **Policy ED 3.7:** Expand functional literacy, ESL programs, and workforce development programs throughout the County.
- **Policy ED 3.8:** Establish Los Angeles County as a model for continuous learning, technical, and professional development.
- **Policy ED 3.9:** Establish employee education, training, and employer assistance initiatives, including expanded trades training and vocational education for high-demand occupations.

### *Implementation Action ED 3.3*

Improve linkages between business and universities, colleges, and private training institutes and service providers.

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### *Implementation Action ED 3.1*

Coordinate the County's workforce development activities with collaborative partners like the California Transportation and Logistics Institute to facilitate sector-based training initiatives in targeted industries.

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### *Implementation Action ED 3.2*

Inventory the existing workforce development programs throughout the County and promote them through vehicles including the County and LAEDC websites.



## Goal ED-4

Expansive and targeted revitalization and redevelopment activities.

- **Policy ED 4.1:** Develop a range of financial incentives and programs that encourage development and business growth.
- **Policy ED 4.2:** Develop and implement an incentive program to retain commercial and industrial activities and promote infill development.
- **Policy ED 4.3:** Assist development and operations of businesses with innovative and targeted financial programs to increase capital access to community-based businesses.
- **Policy ED 4.4:** Establish, renew, implement, manage and/or expand Enterprise Zones, Recycling Market Development Zones, Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Redevelopment Agencies, Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) districts and other innovative financing programs that facilitate community development and rehabilitation.
- **Policy ED 4.5:** Pursue innovative financing programs to pay for new programs, such as impact fees and assessment districts.
- **Policy ED 4.6:** Direct resources to areas targeted as blighted or identified as economically depressed.
- **Policy ED 4.7:** Continue capital improvements planning and prioritization of infrastructure investments.
- **Policy ED 4.8:** Initiate community-level economic development strategies.
- **Policy ED 4.9:** Retrofit and redevelop underutilized and vacant industrial lands and facilities for emerging and targeted industries.
- **Policy ED 4.10:** Aggressively pursue funding and redevelopment of County brownfield sites.
- **Policy ED 4.11:** Encourage and facilitate home ownership through affordable housing initiatives created in collaboration with industry professionals, associations, and economic development professionals.

### Implementation Action ED 4.1

Work with the Community Development Commission to expand and renew the County's redevelopment areas and other incentive zones and districts as a tool to better address the need for economic development throughout the County's industrial areas and to bring needed services and employment opportunities to their communities.

### Implementation Action ED 4.2

Work with the LAEDC to inventory and assess County-owned properties for job-creating development and redevelopment potential.

### Implementation Action ED 4.3

Participate in public-private collaborations to analyze, strategize, create, and invest in redevelopment and development projects of underutilized industrial and commercial properties within the County.

### Implementation Action 4.4

Promote industrial and commercial redevelopment by dedicating resources and implementing policies, plans and procedures to streamline review and approval process.

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## Goal ED-5

A County that is able to initiate, participate in, and foster collaborative efforts to implement economic development activities.

- **Policy ED 5.1:** Identify opportunities to lower the costs of doing business in the County.
- **Policy ED 5.2:** Support, fund and participate in a regional entity that provides economic and business leadership for all Countywide economic development stakeholders.
- **Policy ED 5.3:** Encourage a collaborative inter-agency and inter-jurisdictional environment for economic development and information sharing on economic trends, business cycles and resources.
- **Policy ED 5.4:** Work with the LAEDC and the Jack Kyser Center for Economic Research to analyze emerging trends for policy modification, and maintain and update accurate labor force, market trends, and other important economic data.
- **Policy ED 5.5:** Expand outreach activities with the CDC and LAEDC to implement targeted economic development programs.
- **Policy ED 5.6:** Strengthen contacts and cooperation with private sector organizations and community-level business groups.
- **Policy ED 5.7:** Strengthen the County's legislative advocacy function in Sacramento and in Washington D.C to advance the importance of the County's economic development needs and goals.
- **Policy ED 5.8:** Support the development of small business assistance and entrepreneurial programs focused on management, financial planning and technology application.

### *Implementation Action ED 5.1*

Work with the LAEDC and its business, government and education members to develop, maintain, and implement a broad economic strategy for the entire County.

### *Implementation Action ED 5.2*

Continue the County's participation in a joint County-City of Los Angeles economic strategic policy development initiative.

### *Implementation Action ED 5.3*

Expand economic development strategies, such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts, and California State Enterprise Zones to stimulate the revitalization and redevelopment of older neighborhoods in economic distress.

### *Implementation Action ED 5.4*

Develop an economic development incentives program for green buildings, infill development, brownfield remediation and alternative energy production.

### *Implementation Action ED 5.5*

Develop a benchmarking mechanism to monitor progress and measure outcomes related to economic development.

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